The Misunderstood Christ

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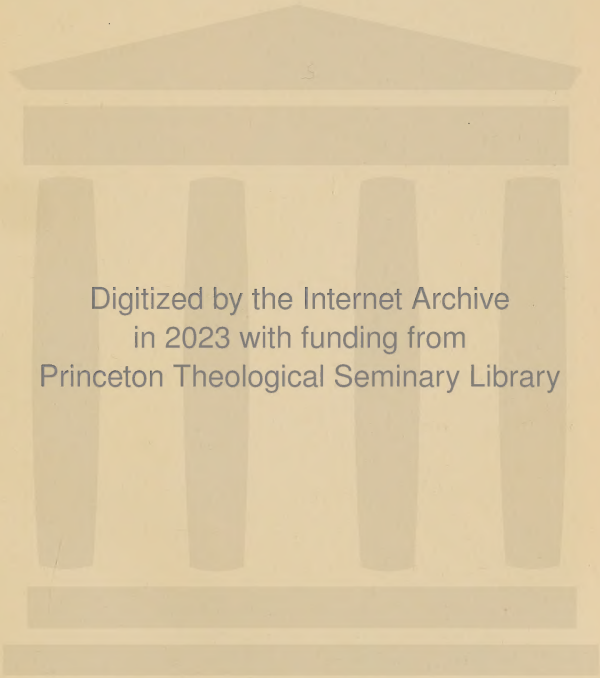
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THE MISUNDERSTOOD CHRIST

BY
FRED B. WYAND
Preacher
Methodist Episcopal Church, South
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INTRODUCTION

BY
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Birmingham, Alabama

"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

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To

THE KINGDOM BUILDERS

of Monterey

That Loyal Company of Laymen
Whose Effectual Fervent Prayers and Consecrated Lives
have helped me to preach

INTRODUCTION

LEGEND records that shortly after the Ascension, Jesus met the archangel, St. Michael, who inquired of Him the plan of salvation He had developed for mortals before He left the earth. The Master replied that He had chosen twelve disciples to whom He told the Story. They, in turn, were to tell it to others, who, in turn, were to repeat it until it had been heard in every corner of the world. When St. Michael inquired what further plan He had if His followers should discontinue telling the old, old story, the Master replied, "I have no other plan."

The Master's plan has been followed through the twenty centuries since His brief stay on earth. His followers have gone to preach His word unto all peoples. Many consecrated preachers have been effectual not only in the pulpit, but also by the written word.

The thirteen sermons offered by our author have been heard from the pulpit. Their message is now through this book available to many others who could not have the benefit of hearing them spoken.

Naturally, the main theme underlying the group of sermons is a call to follow Christ in this unusual age where the temptations to forget Him are so powerful. The author reminds us most forcefully that the human soul is after all of more value than

anything else. All of us do have "a rendezvous with life." When people come to themselves, they will recognize Jesus Christ as the "mighty dynamic" and "the light of the world."

Those who have had faith, and were not "quitters" in the spiritual, as well as in other realms, have been the great of the earth during the past ages. The clarion call comes through these sermons for all to continue along the road which may be rough at times, and through service to God and fellowman, reach salvation.

GUY E. SNAVELY.

Birmingham, Ala.

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THESE sermons have been given to print as they were preached from the pulpit, consequently retaining the phraseology of the preacher rather than the writer.

F. B. W.

Methodist Church,
Monterey, Va.

THE MISUNDERSTOOD CHRIST

THE MISUNDERSTOOD CHRIST

"Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" *St. Matt. 11. 3.*

HEARKEN! We hear the voice of one crying in a prison. It is the voice of John, baptizer of the Christ, calling from Machærus prison on yonder shores of the Dead Sea. 'Tis the same voice we heard, not so long ago in the wilderness, crying, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." But how different the sound! The ringing note of certainty is silent. The apprehensive key of doubt is sounding. Yes! I wit, some hold John had not suffered a qualm of faith but sent forth his disciples to interview the Master that their wavering faith might be confirmed. The lesson appears to say more. "He sent two of his disciples, And said unto him, Art thou he that should come? . . . . Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John." John was calling for information and the message was sent direct to him. Jesus would not have sent the word of assurance to him had he not needed it.

Now, why so great a change in the mind of this great man? He had had unique association with Christ and actual demonstrations that Jesus was the Messiah. He had recognized Him as such before he baptized Him and hesitated to do so until Christ insisted. John had been told by the Father, that

during the sacred service of the baptism of His Son, the Spirit in the form of a dove would descend upon Him. And John saw this, "And bare record that this is the Son of God." He, also, saw the heavens open and he heard the Voice from above, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This same man, who had beheld this scene and had introduced Christ to the beholding multitude as "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," now in his own heart was wondering if it could have been true.

What had wrought such a change in him? Why was he all agog with such a question?

Outwardly things had changed. His work had been brought to a standstill by "that fox" Herod Antipas. His popularity had waned. The crowds, he had faithfully served, now forsook him. And he was in prison. None came to cheer him save a few discouraged disciples. Then he thought of Jesus. Would He forsake him? Would He disappoint him, also? It appears that way. During the eleven months of John's confinement, Christ never visited him once. No effort on His part was made to free His forerunner. He did nothing to stay the cruel hand of Herod, that went forth to please the whims of a nautch girl. Perhaps the human in John spoke forth saying, "The Son of God is given all power in heaven and in earth, and if this One were He, certainly He would assert His authority, turn me free, sparing me this suffering and perse-

cution." John misunderstood Jesus. Christ came neither to free men from physical prisons nor to crown their heads with earthly glories. He came to do a greater work. To free their souls from the prison of sin and turn their feet in the way that leads to the Royal Diadem.

"He breaks the power of canceled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood availed for me."

Since the days of "The Man Christ Jesus" the tragedy of all the ages has been, they knew not nor understood Him. The Jews, having looked until their eyes were dim for His coming, misunderstood and disowned Him when He passed through the streets of their city. For a time, His own chosen disciples walking by His side misunderstood His mission to earth and looked for Him to restore again the kingdom of Israel and command the throne of David. The Church Fathers of not so long ago thought in order to be a follower of the Christ it was necessary to be shut up in a monastery, secluded from the sins of the world. They were characterized by such niceties as found expression in the Song of Solomon "I have washed my feet and how shall I defile them" and trampled to the ground His command "Go ye into all the world." Jesus was the most misunderstood man of all the earth.

I fear He is misunderstood to-day. Misunder-

stood sometimes by honest hearts. Sincere souls stand appalled at the suffering of the righteous and ask why it is so. Some of the most devoted saints are called to bear the heaviest cross. Is it a penalty for past sins? Or doesn't Christ care? It is neither. Nowhere has Jesus promised His followers immunity from sorrow and suffering in this world. He, Himself, walked the Dolorosa that terminated at Calvary. Jesus came not to spare men from cross-bearing, but to enable them to carry their cross with a smile. Here is the difference between the Christian and the one who is not. Listen, heart! How are you carrying your cross?

Are not some misunderstanding Jesus' plan of salvation? Many come to these altars expecting to find salvation a matter of feeling, and really insist it come in that fashion. Who am I to tell Christ how to save me? Who am I with this puny finite intellect to attempt to advise the Infinite Eternal Mind by what route salvation must come to my soul? It has been already determined. Salvation is not based on feeling, but on faith in the blood of the Crucified One. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," said the missionaries to the keeper of the jail at Philippi, "And thou shalt be saved." John comes along and tells us, "Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." Don't misunderstand this all important truth upon which hinges the eternal destiny

of your immortal soul. I have not said that at the hour of conversion one is destitute of feeling. What I want to make clear is that faith, and not feeling, is prerequisite of salvation. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

What about knowing if we are saved or not? I believe many saved person grope around in the dark concerning this most vital truth. In their confusion and misunderstanding of Jesus, they go on wondering and guessing, when if they would but read and understand His Word they would know. Hear ye it! "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we LOVE the brethren." These simple facts we can understand. No one needs to tell us if we love or not. We know. I believe on the other hand there are not a few who have fooled themselves into believing they are saved when they are not. They may attend church. They may even take part in the services and yet be unsaved. May we understand the Word here? "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." The man, who loves, is saved. The man, who does not, is not saved. He may pray all he pleases, and give even his body to be burned, but if he has not love in his heart for all, he is LOST, LOST, LOST. Bud Robinson in his characteristic way puts it, "Some people say they can't stand Bud Robinson. Well,

I'm not good looking nor brainy, but if you don't love me the devil will get you." Onewhere Wesley asked, "What is religion then?" And answered. "It is neither more nor less than love: it is love which is the fulfilling of the law, the end of the commandment. Religion is love for God and our neighbor; that is, every man under heaven. This love ruling the whole life, animating all our tempers and passions, directing all our thoughts, words, and actions, is pure religion and undefiled." Say what we will; feel as may, but if we are on the outs with our fellowman, our religion profiteth us nothing. It is useless for us to say, "Lord, Lord" if we do not the things He commands us. And the greatest of all commandments insist we love God with all our heart and our neighbor as ourselves.

Frequently Jesus is misunderstood relative to the blessings He has in store awaiting us. "Well, Brother Jones," said one colored deacon to the other, as they came from the church where the new preacher gave his first sermon, "What does ye think of 'em?" Jones replied, "He be a power in prayer, I tell ye. He done and gone already and asked de Lawd for things de other pawson didn't know de Lawd had." Here is a truth. How many of us have ever received all the blessings the Lord would like to give us? May we not have a fuller Christian experience? So many at conversion stop there, as if there were nothing more to gain. I grant you, a converted man is a saved man. But God wants to do more for

a man than just save his soul, and transport it to glory when the man falls on sleep. God would like to do something for man, to enable man to do something for Him. You may call it, sanctification or consecration or what you will, just so you mean that act of God which prepares a soul for service and starts it in its labors for the King of kings. It is on this road we strive toward perfection. Have we reached it? No! But we are going in that direction.

> "I'm pressing on the upward way,
> New heights I'm gaining every day;
> Still praying as I onward bound,
> Lord, plant my feet on higher ground."

The real joy of the Christian is found not so much in what God gives us, as it is in what He helps us to give Him. Dr. Torrey in his book "The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit" asks the Spirit filled man not to pray for more of the Holy Spirit, but rather pray that the Spirit might have more use of him. We have heard good men pray for more of the Spirit to come into their hearts as though the Spirit was not a complete Person, but something which could be dished out in various quantities. Can those men understand the nature of the Spirit? We either have the Spirit in us or we do not. There may be a half way business with us. But not so with God. We may allow the Spirit to have only partial con-

trol of our lives. Then our prayer should be for the Spirit to have His way more with us.

You are invited to analyze further the prayers of Christians. Have you not heard men pray for the Lord to save them at last in His kingdom. "And save us at LAST." Jesus taught the opposite. He insisted that His disciples seek the kingdom of God FIRST." Seek ye first the kingdom of God." And yet we mistime and misplace the kingdom. When it is? Now! Where is it? Here! The kingdom of God is at hand. It is closer to you than the person sitting by your side. The kingdom of God is within you. If it is not in us while we live on earth we will never live in it after we depart these mundane shores. We have lost not a little joy in thinking that only after death can we reach heaven, while God intended us to have heaven in our hearts now. Without a doubt our souls will experience greater raptures when we abide in that Eternal City than they can here where we are handicapped by the physical. I trust you shall reach the home of your soul and I would you begin that journey now by admitting His kingdom into your heart. It will be a great day when we stand in the presence of His glory, but I am trying to impress upon your minds just now the thought that it is also a great day when His glory breaks in on us here. John of Revelations looked out and beheld a great wonder in heaven. Is it not also a great wonder that the kingdom of God

can be established in the tiny heart of a little child? Wonder of wonders! The kingdom of God within.

With anxious eyes are you watching for the Christ to re-appear in fashion as He ascended? On that day the dead in Christ will arise and He will gather His own unto Himself. Plan to be there. You are invited. Have you accepted? You have not? Bless your heart my friend, why are you so slow? Accept that wonderful invitation at once! You'll not regret it. That is scheduled to be the biggest affair you have ever seen. You must be there! But I would not have you lose the present glory of the living Christ by looking just for that day and forgetting everything else. Let us understand Jesus. While He bids us watch, He also informs us that He is with us now. "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the consummation of the age." It is great to know He shall come again. But it is also great to know that He came in the first place and that He is here now. I am so Happy He came to the world. What a morning it must have been in heaven when the only begotten Son made ready to leave! I wonder if the angels didn't crowd around Him, pleading with Him to stay there. But love had its way and He came to earth. Why to earth? God had other worlds besides this one on which we live. There are Mars, Jupiter, Venus, Mercury and countless others, all larger than the earth, we are told. A year or two ago, with the aid of a great 36

inch reflector, Lick Observatory gave us drawings of Mars, showing the canal systems and the lay of the land. Surely these planets are inhabited by God's creatures. Yet, Christ didn't visit them. At least He never told us about it. Perhaps the only prodigal of God's whole creation is the world. Anyhow the Son came to save the world and He is here today. Not in His glorified human form is He here. But we can come into His presence now and have fellowship and communion with Him. Samuel Rutherfurd, while in Aberdeen prison said he was dwelling there in the presence of his King and that the radiant personality of Jesus made the stones of his cell shine forth like diamonds. Jesus can change our prison into a heaven of light and beauty. He can change our Gethsemane into a garden of life and glory. Anywhere and everywhere, where Jesus is 'tis heaven there.

"And He walks with me, and He talks with me,
And He tells me, I am His own;
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known."

Have we lost our text? Please help me find it at once.

We have observed that Jesus had failed to visit the prisoner in a physical sense. But had we tarried longer we would have discovered the presence of the Spirit. Before John could place an interrogation mark to that tremendous question of doubt, the

Spirit broke in upon his troubled heart, with a wonderful sweep of hope and glory, which made him continue, "Or do we look for another?" What magnificent hope! Such could not come from a heart without God. John, incarcerated for his faith in Christ, was willing if mistaken here to keep on looking, regardless of prison and shame, for the approach of the Son of God. He refused to be reconciled to this life without Christ. All the prison sufferings and persecutions Herod might inflict could not crush his hope in God. Brave heart! Great soul! And as the Spirit had His way, John's faith was made complete and he began to understand. Just then came back the answer from the Master. It came through human instrumentalities. Jesus said to the disciples, "Go and shew John." And they went. John asked no further questions. He was satisfied. He understood. Not that he understood everything about Christ. It is not given men this side of the stars to know all the wonders and mysteries of the Eternal. No plummet can fathom His depths; no human mind can wholly comprehend His love; no earthly eye can stand to gaze upon the Wonderlit Throne of the Abiding City. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered in to the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." It is well that we can know and understand only in part. Had we infinite knowledge all mysteries and wonders would disappear and we would have no God worthy of wor-

ship. Yet there are many things God would have us understand concerning Himself. And many are the means that He uses to bring us in harmony and in knowledge of the Christ. His disciples reflect His life. His Word acquaints us with Him. His Spirit leads us to the truth concerning Himself. By using all the means at hand, John understood all that was necessary for him to know about his Lord. It is the same to-day. May we utilize every effort that we might grow in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Savior, and at each step of our journey we will come to understand more and more about Christ.

WHY MEN FAIL TO COME TO CHRIST

WHY MEN FAIL TO COME TO CHRIST

"And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." *St. John 5. 40.*

If I were thirsty should I search for a sand-heap to find something to quench my thirst? I would look for a fountain. If I were suffering from a malady should I wander into a banking-house to procure a remedy for my pain? I would go to a dispensary. If I were in need of health should I enter a cemetery to convalesce? I would locate myself at a health resort. If I were in need of eternal life should I search these sacred scriptures for it? I would precipitate my steps in the direction of the source of life eternal, the Christ.

In the case of the men of Jerusalem it was different. They were in search of life, but they went to the scriptures to find it. "Ye search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life." Moffatt gives it, "You search the scriptures, imagining you possess eternal life in their pages." Scriptures cannot give it. No man, seer, prophet, priest nor angel can grant it. It is the gift of God. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Through whom? Through Christ! "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. He that believeth on the Son hath

everlasting life: and he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Yet, men fail to come to Him for life. Why? Truly God is not at fault. He has made adequate a plan of salvation. "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger: he that believeth on me shall never thirst." His invitation is broad. It is universal. It is to whomsoever. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Don't tell me one man is elected to be saved and another to be lost. Not an earnest heart that has come to Christ for life, since the day he spoke the words of my text to the wanderlusts of the temple, has gone away empty. "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." The need is imperative. On every hand men are dying. Everywhere we hear, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." Good and bad die. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Caleb and Christ died. The annual death rate of the human race is 33,000,000. Every day 91,000 pass over. 3,700 move out in an hour. 62 per minute. If it required thirty-five minutes to preach this sermon, during the time I am preaching, nearly 2,000 souls will step into eternity. Regardless of whether they are saved or unsaved. "This corruption shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality." Helpless mortals are

we, and helpless immortals shall we be, without Christ. With Him we can be victorious; even over death and the grave. "Thanks, thanks be unto God, who giveth victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." It grieved Him then when He stood in the midst of the people and saw them search for life and, yet, they refused to come to Him for it, but died without hope. It grieves Him now. Methinks there are tears in His eyes and sorrow in His heart, as He looks down from the battlements of heaven beholding men rushing through life without a Saviour and utterly hopeless face eternity. "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

The need is great. The opportunity to come has been given. Men don't fail to come because they have had no opportunity. Some have had opportunity after opportunity and, yet, will not come. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." He doesn't coerce men to come. He gives the invitation, grants the opportunity, but man must of his own free will come. Noah was not driven into the ark; he was invited in. "Come thou and all thy house into the ark!" Still, men fail to accept the invitation. Why? I have shown you that it is no fault of God.

It is not that men desire to be lost. Does the thief steal for the sake of going to prison? Does the criminal murder so that he might be executed?

Certainly not. He fights death through the courts, appeals his case, and petitions the authorities for pardon. A sinner isn't a sinner for the sake of eternal death. No man is anxious to die and go out into the night alone without a ray of hope.

It is not ignorance that inhibits the approach to Christ. Ignorance played no part in the failure of the Jews to come. They knew who Jesus was. They read the Scriptures which testified of Him. "And they are they which testify of me." For a little while they had flocked to Jordan and many were baptized by John and for a season they had rejoiced in his light. "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea." They heard John testify that Christ was the Lamb of God who had come to take away the sins of the world. Some of them were present on the day when Jesus was baptized and acclaimed to be the Son of God not only by John but by the Father also. The heavens were opened, "And Lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." God the Father bore testimony to the Sonship of Christ. His very works corroborated this. In the very presence of these men to whom Jesus was speaking, Christ had cured a man suffering from an infirmity for thirty-eight years. They knew Him. It wasn't a case of ignorance with them that they failed to come to Him. It was a case of the will. They had not willed to come. The same thing holds true this day. Some men just will not will to come.

Sometimes a preacher can get his sermons on his knees. Other times his feet come in good. In the preparation of this sermon I left my study and went out on the streets and deliberately asked non-professing men, why they had failed to accept Christ. One says, "There are hypocrites in the church, and I refuse to join such a crowd." Facts are facts, so let's face them. Gipsy Smith told the preachers of England sometime since that they shouldn't preach in the morning as if they were preaching only to saints. They were not. "About two-thirds of the church membership," said he, "needs to be converted." Yes, there are hypocrites in the church. There are church members full of imperfections. But, "The church is not a gallery for the exhibition of eminent Christians," said Henry Ward Beecher, "It is a school for the education of imperfect ones." Let us see what a hypocrite is, and then see if the church is the only place where he resides. A hypocrite is a pretender, a counterfeit, an imitation, not the genuine article. The world is full of such. Both men and things. Politics are not without hypocrites. Men running for office promise you one thing before election and after they are elected do the very antithesis. But men still cast the ballot. There are hypocrites in the lodges. But men still join them. There are hypocrites in the matrimonial field. Couples are being divorced and men and women are leaving each other. But just the same, men and women are still marrying. Money is counterfeited.

But men still work for wages and spend their money when they get it. There are bogus checks abroad. But men still sign checks and the banks honor them. There are hypocrite diamonds in the land. Imitations we call them. But men are still buying diamonds and women are still wearing them. Everywhere you look you will find hypocrites, counterfeits, pretenders and imitations. The church is not alone in housing them. So this is no valid reason why a man should fail to come to Christ. The unsaved man is headed for perdition and hell will be full of hypocrites. The only realm free of them, that I know of, is heaven. If these pretenders bother you here, you better head for the place where they will come up missing.

Another says, "There is not sufficient difference discernible between the lives of the church people and the world." You hear it on every side. "I am as good as so and so in the church." And again, "I know people just as good as so and so of your church." Is the sinner fair in his comparisons? He doesn't take the whole of the outside world in comparison to the whole of the church. He picks out the best man of the world and the worst hypocrite of the church to make his comparison. Let us take the worst man of the world and the worst man in the church and compare them. Then find the best man of the world and the best man in the church and compare them. Now if we are honest in our comparisons we must admit the church has the better

class every time. The cut-throats, criminals and vilest of the earth are not professing Christians, neither claim they any adherence to the church. Supreme Court Justice Lewis L. Fawcett, of New York, a year or two ago said, "The Church is the greatest character-building agency in the world; its teachings the most effective antidote for delinquency and crime. Out of 4000 boys arraigned before me charged with crime, only three were members of a Sunday School at the time of the commission of their crimes." The best men of all the ages have been believers in and followers of God. Since the days of the Son of man the best men have been men who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord. All history confirms this assertion. The men who have done the most for humanity have been the men imbued with the Christ Spirit.

And another says, "I am afraid I cannot hold out. So I'll not come." May I apply that logic in a different sphere? I am very hungry. Now according to this theory I should not eat. Why? What's the use? Though I were to eat until my appetite was appeased the food would not sustain me indefinitely. In a few hours I would need to eat again. Now if I were to follow such science of reasoning as suggested I would starve to death, but I use sense, I eat, and when I get hungry again I eat some more. Christ can satisfy every hungry soul who comes to Him, and keep him satisfied as long as he continues to come. If he can save a sinner when he comes the first time, He can

surely keep him saved, if that soul will but come and abide in Him. It requires no more power to keep a man saved than to cleanse him from sin and save him in the first place, and keep him saved the first twenty-four hours. Then if the Lord can keep a man faithful one day, He can keep him likewise a week. If He can do it a week, why not a month? If a month, why not a year? If a year, why not a life time? All power is His in Heaven and in earth. The great God who can pick a baby bird from its nest and on tiny wings lift it to mid air and send it on a thousand mile journey and never allow it to touch the ground, can lift a soul from the depths of sin and start him on the way to glory and not permit him to fall by the way. It isn't man who does the holding out. It is the Lord who holds him steady.

Yet another, thinking of the things of the world, says, "It is impossible for me to forego the things I love." Things of the world keep many hearts from Christ. On close observation, however, we find it isn't impossible to forfeit those things which hinder one's approach to Christ. Often times men will not let them go but they could, if they would, by the help of God. If they were to give them up and come to Christ they would find more pleasure, happiness, peace, satisfaction and joy in the Christian life than in the life of the things of the world. Men, having had much experience in earthly affairs and pleasures before they became Christians, always bear testimony to this truth. God has so created man that

man will be restless until he finds God. Without God man is the most discontented and dissatisfied creature on earth. The bird lilts her song through the day and at evening without a care she nests amid the swaying branches and falls to sleep. At the end of day myriads of insects hum and buzz for a moment and then without a thought of the morrow crawl into a log and go soundly asleep. The man of the world is different. Solomon had reached the end of a tired day. A day of earthly pleasures and fortunes. He was the most gorgeously arrayed and honoured king of the earth. He had seen all things under the sun, and had kept no delights from his eyes. He had builded palaces, planted groves and vineyards, made orchards and gardens, lakes and pools of water and had great possessions above all men that were in Jerusalem before him. He had gathered silver and gold and the peculiar treasure of kings and of provinces. His fame had traveled far and wide. The great of the ends of the earth came to behold his glory, even to the coming of the Queen of Sheba. And when she saw his wealth and splendor she exclaimed, "The half was not told me!" Yes, Solomon was great. But listen to his own words as he looked upon his gatherings; "The eye is not satisfied with seeing; nor the ear filled with hearing. He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase; this is also vanity. All was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there is no profit under the

sun." No man drank of worldly delights more deeply than he, and now what is his advice? It is "Fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." Instead of a man saying he can not give up the things of the world, for Christ, he should say he can not give up Christ for the things of the world. The things of the earth will fail but the things of Christ are eternal. In coming to Christ man will not only find a new peace and happiness and joy in this life but will find that which abides eternity.

Still another says, "I am not willing to be governed by any ecclesiastical power, I am going to be my own boss." No man is not his own ruler. Satan has deceived some into thinking that they were, and at the same time made them his servants. Man will either listen to the dictates of the devil or he will obey Christ. The devil is the worst task-master of whom I have ever heard, while Christ's yoke is easy and His burden is light. Satan pays the meanest wages imaginable. "The wages of sin is death." And "The way of the transgressors is hard." Christ is the Master of love. He has loved us and has given Himself for us. If the unsaved man doesn't believe there are two voices that call for obedience, let me stop here and throw out an invitation for the unsaved to come to the altar, and I will say that to every unsaved person in this house that a voice will speak to him saying he ought to be a Christian and another voice will tell him to keep his seat. The voice that

says go, is Christ; the other, is Satan. You will listen to one or the other. No man does as he pleases. A man isn't exalting himself to the humiliation of the preacher when he fails to respond. He exalts the devil and rejects the Christ.

I interviewed a man who never attends the services of the church. When I asked him why he had failed to accept Christ he informed me that he had absolutely no excuse and was aware of the fact that he ought to be a Christian. Can such a one be fair with his soul? Is he treating his soul right when he gives it no chance for salvation. I read of a young woman having a certain apathy in her nature which made her indifferent to religion. She didn't care for the church and had no concern for her lost soul. A revival meeting started in her neighborhood. She did a very unusual thing. She attended the first night and kept going. A few nights later the evangelist held an inquiry meeting for those interested in their soul salvation and this young lady was present. When the evangelist spoke to her about her soul she quickly informed him that she had no special interest in the subject of religion. He then asked her her reason for coming into the inquiry room to which she answered, "When I heard that these special meetings were to be held, I made up my mind that I would at least give my soul a chance to be saved by attending every service. So I came to this meeting." Now here was a woman indifferent about her soul, but decided she would at least be

fair with her soul and give it a chance for life by attending the house of prayer, whether she was saved or not. Just one thing could happen in such a case. She was wonderfully saved. Think of the myriads of people who never read the Bible, never attend church, never hear the gospel proclaimed nor in any way give their souls a chance. Here I was talking with a man out from Christ, having no excuse for being a sinner, living in this community of churches, Bibles and religion, and absents himself from the services and the things of God, and consequently gives his soul no chance for life. That is a tragedy. A man should at least be fair with his immortal soul and give it a chance for salvation.

Recently I heard Dr. George Truett say, "Procrastination is the thief of the soul as well as the thief of time." That which keeps more people from coming to Christ than everything else is procrastination. They postpone salvation until it is too late. If we could make an excursion through perdition we would find more souls there because of this one thing, than for all the stealing, lying, drinking, murdering and other sinnings combined. Your soul has not a more subtle enemy to battle than the enemy of procrastination. Every time the sinner puts off Christ it becomes more difficult to accept Him next time. Every time he listens to the tempter makes it easier to listen to him again. It is possible that every unsaved man in this house can be saved at some future time. But it is also possible

that he can not. Rev. John McDowell tells of calling on a young man sick in bed. When he spoke to the sick about his soul, the man put him off saying there was plenty of time to decide that issue. The next morning the minister was summoned to the home and found the boy had taken a turn for the worse and was dying. Leaning over the young man he called and called. He made no answer. The father came and called, "My son! My son!" The mother came and called. "My boy! My boy! This is mother! Open your eyes!" But the boy could not respond, notwithstanding it was his mother calling. He could not. The willingness to call was just as strong as ever but the power to respond had failed. You may speak of the saving of a dying thief and the eleventh hour opportunity, if you will, but you forget the power to accept, then, may fail. The willingness of God will call down through the years to come to every unsaved man to come to Christ, but the power to hear and respond weakens every time the sinner fails to obey. We cannot quench the Spirit and harden our hearts without paying the price. This is the day of salvation. The accepted time is now.

"Fully persuaded, now to believe,
Fully persuaded, Christ to receive,
I hear God's Spirit say,
'Now' is the Saviour's way,
'Some more convenient day'
May never, never come."

Now, may I pick up what I have said and hang it on this word? Men should not fail to come to Christ because there are some hypocrites in the church, for beginning with Jesus and tracing it down through ecclesiastical history we find the best men of all times have been the men of God. Why should a man hesitate saying he cannot hold out, when it is not his to do? Christ is to keep us faithful. A man should be happy to forfeit perishables for the imperishable, eternal things of God. These are they that can satisfy the soul of man. We are going to serve God or mammon, for man is not his own governor. It is better to serve the Master who loves us than the one who curses us. He who gives his soul no chance to be saved is unfair with his soul. Procrastination is the soul's greatest thief. To-day is the soul's best opportunity for salvation. The invitation is given. Come to Jesus now! He will save you. He will save you now.

PREREQUISITIES OF SALVATION

PREREQUISITES OF SALVATION

"What must I do to be saved?" *Acts 16. 30.*

THE reason why everyone in the world is not saved, is because he has not met the required conditions necessary to salvation. The reason why he has not met the conditions is simply because he didn't want to. God is anxious to save everyone. Jesus came among us to seek and save every lost person. For that purpose He left the ninety-and-nine and moved among the refuse and dung-heaps of humanity. But He cannot reclaim the lost against his will. As a shepherd may search the storm swept mountains in the darkness of the night to rescue his lost sheep, cannot save the sheep if it will flee every time he comes upon it, so cannot Christ save a soul that flees from Him.

Our theme this morning is, Prerequisites of Salvation; our text is the question of the Philippian guard to the missionaries, Paul and Silas, found in the Book of Acts, the sixteenth chapter and at the thirtieth verse: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

The midnight hour had just struck. The jail was full of prisoners. Some were sleeping. Some were lying awake, their consciences troubling them; some were thinking of home and loved ones from whom they were separated. Others were weeping and moaning. Others were cursing God and man.

But there were in the inner prison two peculiar prisoners. Wherever you find Christians you find a peculiar people. They are always different from anyone else. They are a new creation. They were not peculiar, that is Paul and Silas were not peculiar, because they were in prison. Lots of folk got into prison in those days. They were not peculiar because they had been beaten. That often happened to men. But they were peculiar in the way they behaved under suffering. That dark night in the dungeon, with their feet fast in the stocks, they held a song and praise service. They sang praises to God instead of groaning over their bleeding backs. Instead of cursing their persecutors they prayed. The like had never taken place before within the walls of that jail.

When I was in Europe I visited Mont St. Michel which was built on a rock in the sea a mile from the coast of France. Work began on this immense building about the year 709 A.D. and it was under construction for several centuries. It has been the scene of many political and religious controversies. Under the same roof everything can be found from an inner prison to the monk's walk; from the black vault, where prisoners like Dubourg who had written against the king were left to be eaten by rats, to the Lace Stairs; from a lonely cemetery to a beautiful cathedral. The church was over a hundred years in building (1020 to 1135). I was especially anxious to see the inner prison. In order to get in, the door

being only a little hole, I had to crawl through, and when I got within, the ceiling was so close to the floor I was unable to stand erect. The cell was small in proportion, damp and perfectly dark. Heavy chains were fastened to the wall which manacled the feet of the prisoner. What little food was given was passed through a little hole in the wall, which was about on the level of an inmates mouth. A few minutes in such a place seemed long to me. Quickly I returned to the light and air. Surely it was not an inviting atmosphere in there for a song and praise service. But in such a place the missionaries of our lesson held that wonderful prayer meeting that has sent its lasting influences down the ages for the world to cherish. How often we meet in great cathedrals, beautiful in architecture, perfect in acoustics, and there with a big congregation offer up prayers to God that never are answered. The reasons why they are unanswered, is not to be discussed in this sermon. Only let me say in passing, God's Spirit does not always hover over great and beautiful buildings. But in beautiful, faithful hearts He is always present. That night God was there around about and in that Philippian jail, and directly answered the supplications of His followers. God reached forth His hand and rocked the old earth in her course. He pressed His finger against the prison and the walls swayed to and fro, the doors flung ajar, the shackles fell from the prisoners and all were set free. The sleeping guardsman sprang to his feet and with

startled eyes beheld the happenings. He was about to commit suicide when the Apostle cried out "Do thyself no harm! for we are all here." Then he turned, fell down before the missionaries and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" That was the most important question he had ever asked. It was of the biggest concern to his body, yea, and to his very soul. There was nothing else of interest to him then. He didn't fool time asking why it thundered? or what made the earth tremble? or who threw open the doors of the prison? He knew that something out of the ordinary had happened. And something extraordinary had to still happen or he would lose his head. No wonder he threw himself upon the mercy of the men of God and shouted to the top of his voice, "What must I do to be saved?" He used sense here. He didn't ask some old criminal what to do in order to be saved . He put the question direct to the only two Christians who were there. Their word meant more to him than the combined word of all the other prisoners. Say what you please, but we have more confidence in the word of the Christian today than we have in a score of vile mouth flibbertigibbets. Hear him! "What must I do to be saved?" He knew something had to be done, and it had to be done in a hurry.

Salvation is like everything else. It is conditional. The Lord says to a farmer, "I will give you a corn crop if you will meet the conditions." If the farmer wants the crop, he will go forth and plow the land

and get it in shape for planting. Then he will sow the seed. But that is not all. He will have to cultivate the corn, keep the weeds out, and scare away the crows. In the fall it will become necessary for him to shuck the corn and haul it in to the crib. God's part of the contract is to furnish the soil, send the rain and sunshine and the season. Man is to do the rest of the work. The same is true with salvation. God keeps His part of the contract. The blood has been shed. The atonement has been made and it is up to man to meet the conditions. Now what are they? What must an unsaved man do before he can be saved? What are the prerequisites of salvation?

Man must first recognize that he is a responsible being, accountable to a power higher than himself. The prison sentinel keenly felt his responsibility to the officers of the law when they charged him to keep securely imprisoned Paul and Silas and therefore he placed them in the inner cell and made their feet fast in the stocks. He had a definite work to perform. He was stationed at the prison for a purpose. Every person here on earth is not here by accident but is here for a purpose. That is true outside of the realm of man. The fields are here to produce grain and grass and food for man and beast. The bird has been schooled in nature's conservatory and comes forth singing her love songs. Waters are sent forth rushing through their channels on the mission of satisfying the thirst of all the living, and when har-

nessed become the mighty power that turn the wheels of mills and factories, and their energy can be used to light the homes and streets of a city on a dark night. A peach tree has one work to do. As a shade tree it is a failure. Birds do not consider it a good place for nesting. "But it is the only tree on earth that can bring forth delicious yellow peaches. That is its mission. Now then, if the soil of the hillside has a definite work to do; if the tiny bird has a special song to sing; if the waters that ripple down from the mountain have something to do that nothing else can do; if the tree has a peculiar service to render in producing fruits after its kind, don't you believe that man, the greatest of all living things, has a definite mission in life? I do! The preacher of the Old Testament did. And he said, the whole duty of man was to "Fear God and keep his commandments."

Now, the unsaved man must see that he is responsible to God. Then see that he is failing to discharge this responsibility. He is not keeping the commandments, neither does he fear God nor love Him. At once the jailer saw he had failed to discharge his duty. He had not kept the prisoners safely. They were all turned loose. Then the guard became greatly worried and troubled. When a sinner sees his responsibility and duty and further sees his failure to measure up to his duty, and becomes troubled about it, that man is under conviction. The first prerequisite of salvation is conviction. No man can be saved until he is first convicted of his

sins. No one sees any need of a Saviour until he first sees himself a failure. If we were bathing near the beach would we shout for help, if we didn't think we were drowning? The jailor didn't cry for help as long as he thought he was master of the situation and had the convicts under his control, but the moment he saw he was powerless to hold them, he was ready to cry for help. Man must realize he is in need of salvation and is utterly unable to save himself. Two men went up into the temple to pray. One man, the Pharisee, prided himself in the fact that he was a good man, better than most men were, and that he was good enough to be satisfied with himself. The other man, who happened to be a publican, saw nothing in himself of which to be proud, and he prayed for God to be merciful to him, and acknowledged, he was a sinner. One man saw no need of a Saviour because he could not see himself a sinner; the other man feeling he was a sinner saw the need of a Saviour, and consequently he went down from the temple justified, while the other went away condemned. To be saved a man must first come under the conviction that he is a sinner, and unless something is done he will be lost. Lost forever! The reason we have so many death-bed conversions, is due to the fact that when men come face to face with eternity they see their lost condition, then are convicted of their sins, and see the need of a Saviour.

Following conviction of sin there comes in logical

order, confession. When a man is face to face with his sins, he will want to get rid of them. It is no pleasure to look on sin. Something must be done to remove the vision. Some will try to forget their sins. Some will seek pleasure and amusements, thinking thereby to escape the thought of sin. Others have retired to the bottle thinking to drown their sins and forget them that way. Various ways have been tried by men to rid themselves of the thoughts of sin. And all the ways men have ever invented to get rid of this hideous sight have been futile. Men come into our meetings, get under conviction, and like the jailor they will tremble and shake from head to foot, then forsake the meetings as if the thing to do is to stay away from church and thus try to escape the sight of their sins. Try it if you want to, but some day, like a ghost in the night, those sins that you have tried to blot from your vision that day when you left the church and all consequent sins, will leap before you and send you to hell. There will be no forgetting in eternity, Christ made this perfectly obvious in the case of Dives and Lazarus. In hell Dives had a complete memory of all that which took place in his life time. There his sins stood out before him and kept him ever under condemnation. It is a terrific thing to stand face to face with your sins. Many of you know the pain being under conviction. If the whole body quivers and rocks to and fro under the conviction

of sin when a sinner hears an altar call given, what must it be when we face sins, unforgiven sins, in eternity, when there is nothing we can do to expunge the thought of sin from our soul? It will be hell. Listen! A man may be under conviction a score of times, although I doubt whether a man can always mock God this long or not, but if it were true a man could get under conviction time and time again, that one can never be saved, unless he confesses his sins. That is the only way we can get rid of them. We must carry them to God and pile them over to Him and acknowledge them to Him and let Him blot them out. He will remove them from us as far as the East is from the West, and remember them against us no more. There will be no such a thing as those sins jumping up before us from time to time to condemn us. They are gone. Not only is the penalty for sin gone. Sin itself has been washed away." If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "His name shall be called Jesus because he shall save his people from their sins." He removes more than the consequences. The cause is also removed.

"A wonderful Savior is Jesus my Lord,
A wonderful Savior to me"
He taketh my sins and casts them away,
From sin and remorse I am free.

"A wonderful Savior is Jesus my Lord"
So wonderful in love is He
That He came to me in my helpless estate,
And made a new creature of me.

"When clothed in His brightness, transported I rise
To meet Him in clouds of the sky,
His perfect salvation, His wonderful love,
I'll shout with the millions on high."

Following confession of sin is repentance. It is said that repentance is a Godly sorrow for sin. It is also said, that a sinner's personal sorrow over his responsible sins, is repentance. A man who comes confessing his sins must be sorry for them. Frequently penitents come to these altars weeping. It is right. God is always sorry when men sin. Man must be sorry. God is sorry because He hates sin. He hates sin because it has blighted and ruined His creatures. Since the day of its first entrance into the world it has been the curse of mankind. Man, too, must learn to hate sin and be sorry for it before he can be forgiven. The other day Billy Sunday told in Staunton the story of Paradise and the pariah. It went something like this. In order for the pariah to gain admission to heaven, it was necessary for him to find the most valuable thing on earth and present it to God. He got a hand full of gold and started to heaven. The angel refused to admit him saying gold was no commodity in heaven. They do not buy and sell in heaven, so had no use

for gold, unless to pave the streets, and all the streets were finished.

He returned to earth and gathered a great amount of precious jewels, such as sapphires, emeralds and pearls, and winged his way back to glory. The angel peeped through the gates and said, "Nothing doing. We don't wear jewelry in heaven. The gates up here are made of pearl and the foundations of our city is made out of precious stones." The pariah was disappointed and came back to earth not knowing what to do. Walking along a stream one day he noticed a little child asleep under a tree. An old desperado stood by looking down into the innocent up-turned little face of the child and great tears were rolling down his cheeks, and he was praying, "Oh, God I wish I were as pure as that little child." The pariah reached out his hand and caught a hot penitential tear fresh from the cheek of the robber, and he rushed to heaven with it in the hollow of his hand. The gates swung on their jeweled hinges and the receiving angels bowed low and said, "Come in! Come in! You have in your hand the most priceless thing of earth, a penitential tear." Repentance is a sorrow for sin so much so that we will do more than confess them, we will hate them and turn from them. Repentence is facing in another direction. Going the opposite way. The prodigal repented when he arose and started in the direction that led home. Before that he was going farther and farther from home. Repentance is a

change of mind. The things you once loved now you hate, and the things you once hated you now love. "Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die?" When a man confesses his sins and asks forgiveness, he must be willing to quit sin and go in the other way. God is not going to save a man in his sins, He must save him from his sins. Man must be willing to cut loose from sin and go forth doing good. No doubt the greatest thing that King David ever did, was to repent of his sins and get right and follow God. That was greater than slaying a Goliath with a stone. That was greater than a shepherd boy ascending the throne of a kingdom and ruling Israel. The greatest thing David ever did was to say, "I have sinned against the Lord," and started in being a man after God's own heart. The best thing any sinner can do is to repent of his sins, not cover them up, and start a new life for Christ's sake. That will set the joybells of heaven ringing. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety-and-nine just persons who need no repentance," no change of ways, of thoughts, of lives.

There is still another prerequisite of salvation that must be mentioned here. A man may see his responsibility; know he is falling short of it; he may be under the conviction of sin; may confess his sins and repent of them, and yet not be saved from sin long enough to tell about it, unless he has faith in God to keep him saved, as well as save him in the first

place. Without faith it is impossible to be saved. No man can alone walk the way to heaven. He must have faith in a Being that is higher than he to lead him safely home. Our confidence is shaken in the man who prides himself in his own power and forgets God. It is the blood of Christ, who through faith, blots out past sins, and it is the same power, through faith, that can make us free from future sins. I read of a physician who was received into the church. At one time he was a drunkard. He made up his mind to quit drinking and he reformed and joined the church. He got on well for a time, and finally he started in taking a so-called social glass, then after a while he was drunk again. The church admonished him and sought to lead him to the source of help, but the man refused saying he was a man with mind enough and strength sufficient to refrain from drink. But he kept failing. Then one day he came and acknowledged that he was ruined and could not keep from drinking. Then for the first time his preacher had hopes for him and told him that no man could keep himself from drinking, but had to rely altogether upon God to keep him free from that sin. The man became willing to try it and was saved from the power of drink by the blood of Christ. The highway of God is a walk by faith not sight. The jailer cried, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved!" Without faith it is impossible to please God. It is impossible to do any-

thing worth while. Without faith, the farmer would sow no seed. Without faith, the merchant would purchase no goods. Without faith, man would not respect his fellow-man. Without faith, a sinner would not come to Jesus for salvation. And without faith, no saved man can keep his love for God. Man ought to be as willing to use faith in the realm of the supernatural as in the realm of the natural. If there is no victory in the natural world without faith, we should expect no victory in the spiritual world without it.

> "He who, from zone to zone,
> Guides through boundless sky thy certain flight
> In the long way that I must tread alone
> Will lead my steps aright."

THE NECESSITY OF FAITH

THE NECESSITY OF FAITH

"Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed." *St. Luke 17. 14.*

Two kinds of men live in every community. The matter-of-fact men and the men of hope. The men who think they walk by sight and the men who know they walk by faith. The one may be called the children of limitation and despair. The other the children of expectation and progress. To this latter class the lepers spoken of in our text belong. Before they were cleansed Jesus commanded them to go and shew themselves unto the priests. Such had not been heard of before. It was the custom that men cleansed of this pernicious disease go to the priests to secure the certificate of cleansing. Men suffering with this malady were forced to keep themselves from personal contact with humanity. They stood in the distance and cried "Unclean" so none would come near them. Now Christ directed them to go into the presence of the church dignitaries. What a terrific thing to do! Coming to the priests with leprosy upon them would surely mean punishment and perhaps death. They had cried for mercy. Now they looked at themselves and saw the white spots as angry as ever and no doubt wondered how mercy could be shown them, by Jesus sending them on to the priests. Did they hesitate to talk it over?

Methinks I hear them now. "We better not go. It will do us more harm than good. We haven't the slightest sign that we are one bit improved. And He did nothing to show us we would ever be cured."

This is the way many unconverted men talk today. They will pass through a revival meeting without accepting Christ and when you approach them they will say that they just don't feel like taking that stand. Yes, they know they should, but don't have sufficient feeling to urge them in that direction. Is it anywhere taught that a man must experience a certain play of emotions before he can come to Jesus? If so, then a lot of good devout Christians would still be waiting to come to Him, instead of being already consecrated to His service. "No man can come unto me," said Jesus, "Except the Father which hath sent me draw him." Wonderfully true. Ponder on it! But remember God doesn't always draw men by quickening first their emotions. I believe Saul of Tarsus had some fathomless depths of feelings before he owned Christ as his Saviour. While on the other hand I firmly believe before Levi even considered his feelings in the matter, he arose and followed Jesus. God may call men over many avenues unto Himself. Some come through feelings of fear. Some through knowledge. Then God brings some by the hands, and hearts, and prayers of others. Yes He has many, many ways, other than these mentioned, to call the prodigals home. Yet, above them all and through

them all, God calls through love and men come by grace through faith in Christ Jesus. And thus the lepers went. Went because they laid aside argument, and feeling and began to have faith in the One whom they had addressed as Master. "And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleaned." They didn't wait until they were first cleansed. Nor until they had evidence they would be. They went just as they were. All the filthiness and disease still clinging to their persons. Such is the way He bids us come. Not wait until we make several improvements in ourselves or some potent urge comes to send us forth.

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!"

Some have argued it would do them no good to go to the altar. So thought the lepers for a while. And it will avail you nothing as long as you think that way, but if you will come trusting Jesus, He will save your soul.

No, you are not too great a sinner to be saved. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Whatever be your age and station in life, however far in sin you may have gone, Love is waiting to pardon you and blot out your transgressions. He has never refused a single one

who has come to Him. The Bible and the combined witness of all Christians aver this. "And him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." "Whosoever will may come." But you must come to Him or He cannot give you salvation. Some would reverse this order. Would prefer first the joy of eternal life and then come. Not unlike the lepers they would appreciate the experience to come afore obedience. There is no reason why we should expect this. Do we gather fruit before the tree is planted? Do we arrive at our destination before we step aboard the train or transport? Is the patient cured before he takes the medicine? Undoubtedly we say "No" in every case. Then why should we expect the Great Physician to cure us of the disease of sin before we have carried out His orders? The lepers were cured after they had exhibited their faith in Him by obeying His command. Remember, they were cleansed, as they went. Their faith had made them whole.

In his fifth chapter Dr. Luke tells of another leper cured by the Christ. This one confessed his faith in Him before Jesus spake. When he saw Him he fell down before Him in worshipful attitude and said, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." It was unnecessary for a further demonstration of faith. So the Master simply reached out His hand and touched the sufferer, saying, "I will: be thou clean." Immediately it was so. See the different methods of healing. The experience of this man was unlike the experiences of the ten. Yet to-day it

appears to be difficult to get some reconciled to this fact. They will hold that our experiences must coincide. We must all be cured by the same method and to the same degree. It is not so taught us in the Word. Look at the four accounts given in the new testament of the restoration of sight to the blind. St. Mark tells of two cases. Bartimaeus, sitting by the highway leading from Jericho, heard of the approaching Jesus and called for help. Jesus told him to go his way, that his faith had effected the cure. At once he saw. But it was different with the case of the blind man of Bethsaida. Jesus took him by the hand and led him out of the village by the sea. He then spat upon his eyes and massaged them with His fingers. After the first treatment He inquired of the man if he could see. The man could scarcely see and nothing look natural. Men looked like trees. Jesus again touched his eyes with His hands and then he saw clearly. This was not only a different method but a longer process to obtain same results. St. Matthew gives us the record of the cure of the two blind men. They like Bartimaeus called to Him for help. In this case Jesus touched their eyes and immediately they saw. St. John tells the way the man born blind was given his sight. Jesus spat on the ground and made an ointment and with this treated the eyes of the blind. He, then, asked the man to go and bathe his eyes with the water from the pool of Siloam. All of which was required ere he saw. Had these brethren lived

during the days of the splitting of the churches and the founding of new denominations, perhaps we would be possessors of four more sects. Namely; The Touch-me-nots. The Spitites. The Touchites and The Mudites. Any of which may be as necessary as many of our present day denominations. It is not by what method or plan Jesus uses to cure me that concerns me half so much as the fact, that once I was blind but now I SEE. Prof. John Wright Buckinghan in his address before the Philosophical Union of the University of California said, "The deeper thought of our time is turning away from religion as dogma, as theory, as ethics, to a religion of experience." We do not care to get away from religion as experience. The man is to be pitied who has no religious experience. But what I am anxious to make clear is that our experiences differ. Yours may be different from the man next to you. The man next to him may be unlike either of yours or mine. Now if I may add to the Professor's remarks, I would say that religion is more than experience. It is life. Only when we let His Holy Word be made flesh, living flesh through us, and have the mind in us which was also in Christ, will men behold His glory reflected by His own. To accomplish this, complete faith, the faith that must come from God, is necessary.

Men have said to me, "I would like to come and accept Christ but I fear I cannot hold out." Certainly no man can! Faith has been misplaced. It

has been turned from faith in Christ to faith in self. Can any man save himself? Everyone who has tried, has failed. Paul did everything he could to find salvation, but he was absolutely without hope until he relied upon Christ. As I have said elsewhere, no man of his own accord can hold out. But Christ can keep him saved, as well as save him in the first place, as long as he believes on Him. When Peter got his eyes off of his Master he started to sink. Just as soon as he turned to Him again Jesus enabled him to step on the waters as if they were solid rocks. Every man who has gone back into sin after he was saved did so because he got his eyes off of the Lord. On the other hand every man has been held steady who has kept his eye of faith upon his Saviour. If I cannot trust Jesus to guide me and keep me faithful now, how can I expect to trust Him then when the waters of death chill this body and these hands refuse to cling to the hands of the ones I love on earth, and I am about to enter that shadowed valley from which no pilgrim returneth? There will be no one in that valley except Jesus and myself. While I know nothing about it, He will know it from end to end. It will be great to be on speaking terms with Him then and be able to trust Him to lead me safely through and bring me out on the other side before His Throne effulgent with the glory of His perennial love. It is said a great saint lay dying. He was approached with the question, "Can you trust Jesus now?" He responded, "Had

I a thousand souls I would trust them all to him." May you commit your life, your very soul unto him! "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." This commitment is made through faith. Without faith Christ can do nothing. In His own town of Nazareth Christ was helpless because the home people lacked faith. "And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." His own miracle working hands were tied because of unbelief.

The lepers were cleansed by faith. The blind saw because they had faith in Him. The lame were made whole through faith. Coming down from the Mount of Transfiguration to the multitude Christ was approached by a father in behalf of his lunatic son. The father said to Christ, "If thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us." Jesus put the "If" where it belonged and returned, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." The father cried out, "Lord I believe; help thou my unbelief." And the foul spirit left the boy and he was made whole. The faith of the father was as necessary to effect the cure, as was the power of Christ. Jesus is the same to-day as He was then and will be to-morrow. The saved are saved to-day through faith and in faith we continue to enjoy the blessings of a Christian life. The very foundations of His Eternal Throne, though builded by love, were laid in faith, God believing

His own would willingly come to live and reign with Him.

"My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary,
Saviour divine.
Now hear me while I pray,
Take all my sins away,
O let me from this day
Be wholly thine.

While life's dark maze I tread,
And griefs around me spread,
Be Thou my Guide;
Bid darkness turn to day,
Wipe sorrow's tears away,
Nor let me ever stray
From Thee aside."

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

"I am the light of the world." *St. John 9. 5.*

The world into which Jesus the Light came was one of darkness. It was true, "The world was made by him," but it was also true, "The world knew him not." And, because of this, the earth was not a place of happiness and peace and joy and light and life; but one of corruption and crime and sin and night and death.

Black-hearted Rome was head of the world. Augustus Caesar was the Imperial Emperor, the master of all things. His word was law. By the touch of his finger the government was set in motion. With the iron heel of his sovereignty he trampled the nations into subjection. He worshiped many gods, but more devotedly the gods of might and gold, and consequently led his country to a pinnacle of power and wealth. August 19th, A.D. 14, he died in the arms of his second wife, Livia, and his body was carried from Nola to Rome, where it was cremated. The ashes were placed in the Mausoleum to be worshiped by the state. His successor to the throne was Tiberius. However, before this could be officially accomplished, three rightful heirs of the kingdom, a nephew and two grandsons, had to be discomfited. Tiberius was the son of Livia by Tiberius Claudius Nero, a former husband whom

she divorced to marry Augustus. Having no sons by Caesar, it is said she formulated the plans to enthrone Tiberius and wipe out the blood of the late emperor. Thus were thrones obtained and kept in the days of the advent of Christ. Herod, ruler of Judea, learning from the Magi a new King of the Jews was born and not being able to find Him, issued shortly thereafter a decree to annihilate all male children two years of age and under, in order to secure his throne. Under such governmental conditions Jesus was born, reared and finally crucified.

Society was in darkness. The greater part of humanity was in slavery. The commonalty had neither voice nor privilege. The men of wealth, position and distinction kept a multitude of slaves to attend them. Thousands of slaves were required to serve one master; as in the case of Augustus who had eight thousand to wait on him, beside six hundred to look after his wife. The masters fared sumptuously every day, while the poor servants were denied the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Paulina went forth clothed in a half million pound garment and slaves went practically nude. Sculptures have preserved pictures of those benighted conditions. The faces of the slaves, wrinkled and hopeless, show forth the cruelties they were forced to endure. On the slightest provocation they were thrown in the arena to become the prey of hungry beasts. Chief among the sports of that

day was the combat between helpless man armed with a small knife and a ferocious beast that soon crushed the life out of the man. Augustus mentions, with pride in his will, the fact that in his day he exhibited eight thousand gladiators and thirty-five hundred wild beasts. Society cruelly mistreated her children. Frequently Orientals murdered their undesirable offspring, while Roman parents stripped theirs of their clothing and set them out in the cold to die of exposure. Into such a wretched state of society Jesus, the Son of God, was escorted.

Worse than the state of society; far worse than the cruel heart of Rome, was the fact that the very Church of God was filled with blackest night. Long since had the prophetic words of the men of God been forgotten and passing through the four hundred and fifty years of silent voices, the church had lost her former glory and ideal. Prophets and seers were succeeded by profiteers and money changers. The Temple was no longer a "House of Prayer." It had become a market-house for speculators and gamblers. Yes, priests and elders were the chief extortioners. Love and service were dead. Law and exaction were the orders of the day. The rights of the neighbor were not thought of. Only after the great light from the heart of the Christ fell across the pathway of the young lawyer, he inquired, "And who is my neighbor?" Rather than help a blind and impotent man on the Sabbath the rabbis and dignitaries of the synagogue sat snugly wrapped

in the big, black shroud of ceremony, dogma and form pretending to be pious and godly. Under this disguise they were trying to figure out how they could further impose upon the weak and rob the poor. Jerusalem, the one time city of the saints, had sunk into the tomb of departed fervor, over which Jesus wept.

Have we clearly in mind the picture? The blackness of Rome; the heartlessness of society; the deplorable condition of the church? Into such a state of affairs the Eternal Light of God in the person of His Son appeared. Surely, it was no wonder He was accorded a cool reception. There was no room for Him in the palace of Herod. No room for Him in the inn at Bethlehem. No room for Him in the Jerusalem Church. They all needed Him in the worst way, but none wanted Him. It is one thing to need Christ, but it is quite another thing to want Him.

Surely old, corrupt, black-hearted Rome, reeling to and fro in vice, blood and crime, was in no hurry to extend the hand of welcome to "The Prince of Peace." Herod gave the Magi no invitation to bring the new born King, when they found Him, to his palace. Instead he issued the decree to extirpate Him. Rome wanted Him not. She preferred her injustice to His principles of righteousness.

Society refused to open her arms to receive Him to her bosom. She slammed the doors of hotels and houses against His face, and couched Him in an un-

kept manger, where for a nursery lullaby He listened to the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the herds, such as tiny lambs and baby calves were accustomed to hear. It was not the custom of society to nurture a child of peasantry. She had no desire for the village carpenter's son.

Long since the church had looked for His coming, but when He came she disowned Him. He came from the house of David but no quarters were granted Him there. "He came unto His own, but His own received Him not." They were too corrupt for that. Too full of sin and selfishness to invite Him in.

No! The church didn't want Him. Society would not receive Him. Rome was set against Him. But, nevertheless, He came, and "We beheld His glory." And He did not come empty handed. He came bringing a great light which the darkness could not overcome. His life was the light, and "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." How short the journey from Bethlehem to Bethany! What a parenthesis from the Annunciation to the Ascension! Only thirty and three years. Yet all the eternal radiancy of heaven bursts forth through these years, and makes luminous the atmosphere of the earth.

What a transformation this light has wrought!

Monarchy has given place to democracy. Practically everywhere, governments are controlled by the people, for the people.

Society has undergone a change. The gladitorial exhibitions are ended. The commonalty is recognized. Class and clan are passing out; equal rights and privileges are afforded all. Thus you and I of the commoner walk of life have a voice to speak and a vote to cast. Light has indeed come to society. "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men."

What a transformation has taken place in the church! She has changed from one of selfishness, law and dogma into one of service, love and song. Busily engaged in lifting the fallen; rescuing the perishing; broadcasting her messages of mercy and compassion, even unto the four corners of the earth.

All history admits that a great change has come, because of that Life and Personality of twenty centuries ago. Brother Wells, in his "Outline of History" allows a great teacher arose out of Judea during the reign of Tiberius Caesar, teaching boldly a new doctrine, "The Kingdom of Heaven," a kingdom which was to be established in the hearts of men, which meant a moral, social and political revolution in the outer world in proportion to its inward enthronement. The light of Christ did two things. It revealed sin! By it, Rome found her sin; by it, human-kind discovered its miserable condition; by it, the church saw her hypocrisy. Had the light done no more than that, it would have been inadequate. But it did something more. It showed these institutions the way out from sin.

A man carries a light at night not that he may just see the rocks in his path, but so he can see the way that leads safely around them. This is what the world needed then, when she discovered her sin; she needed to know how to find the road that led to truth and righteousness. And Jesus was the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

"The whole world was lost in the darkness of sin;
The Light of the world is Jesus;
Like sun-shine at noon-day, His glory shone in,
The Light of the world is Jesus."

The world needed Christ then. And it needs Him now. Behold the present conditions of the world. Untold and unnecessary suffering and misery on every hand. We are careening through the aftermath of history's greatest war. Nations are being weighed in the balance and found wanting. Helpless widows and fatherless children are paying the penalty. What we need to-day is Christ. He is the only hope we have. Talk, as you please, about the League of Nations and the Washington Conference and the Locarno Treaty, but the only one who can bring about world wide love and universal peace, that shall abide all time, is the Son of Divine Love, the Prince of Peace. Let us not pray for a Reformation to take place in this Twentieth Century; what we must have is a Transformation. Christ is not a Reformer; He is a Transformer. Out of old things He makes all things new. Throw open the doors

and look into our average American homes, and we will soon learn if Christ is there or not; He is needed there. If He were there we would not lead the world in divorce courts. Peep through the eyes of Gen. Butler, the former clean-up man of Philadelphia, and you will see that even in the City of Brotherly-love society is in dire need of the light and life of Christ. With all of our need, He will not come unless we want Him. He came one time when the world didn't want Him, but He will not to-day unless we throw open the door to receive Him. And then He will gladly come. As He journeyed from the manger-cradle to the Mount of Ascension, via of Galilee, Jerusalem, Gethsemane and Golgotha, He flung before and after Himself a path full of glory and light, to light the life of every man of all approaching ages. This includes us.

The grandest story earth has ever heard, the heavenly herald whispered into the unsuspected ears of a few peaceful shepherds on the Judean hills of long ago. Why they were so favored by the angel and her chorus will, perhaps, forever remain a mystery to them, until they hear that choir sing again on the morning when the dead in Christ shall rise and be gathered to Him. Pharisees were strongly prejudiced against these humble toilers and looked upon them as unobservers of the rabbinic law. Yes, there were priests set apart in the Temple to mediate the things of God to man. There were learned scribes whose business it was to search the

Scriptures and reveal the deep things of the Lord. But the heavenly messengers that morning ignored them and visited the men sleeping with their flocks. The shepherds entertained the angels. What an honor! Immediately upon the departure of their visitors, the flockmen left for Bethlehem to welcome and visit the new born King. A greater honor! Coming from the scene of the Nativity they climbed the highest hill and sang this song and story across the ages for the ever-coming generations to hear. Since that morning the world has been full of its charm. Step into church on Christmas morning and you hear it again. Enter the Christian home on this sacred day and mother is telling her baby about the Babe of Bethlehem. Tune in on your radio and the air sings for you, "Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Yet, is it not possible for the earth to be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea; for the atmosphere to be made glorious by the Personality Divine; and the heart of man be absent of this light and love? As a man to men, I am asking, have we granted Him admission to our innermost souls? It is said, several years ago a steamer was dashed against the rocks off the coast of Newfoundland. Nearly all the passengers lost their lives. A telegram was sent to

a home in Detroit announcing the death of a young man from that household. The aged mother's heart was broken. The young wife collapsed. A few hours later came a second message reading, "Saved" and it was signed by the man himself. This word conveyed so much joy that the family had it framed and placed it on the walls of the home in memory of this occasion. But I know something that has conveyed even greater joy than this. It was the Word that came from God in the person of His Son. Keep this Word in your home and yours is the house of happiness. Truly exalt Him in the church and we will worship together in the unity of faith, and the unity of the Spirit, with one accord and one purpose coming "Unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Crown Him Lord of His creation, wars and rumors of war will pass away, and in the sunlight of His love we shall dwell together as children of one Father. Have we taken the angel's word of good tidings of great joy, and framed it and placed it over the doorway of our heart? If not, do it now! Then your life shall be the abundant life. Emperor Charles V. of Germany, king of Spain, lord of the Netherlands, is said to have won almost unparalleled worldly prosperity and human glory. In most of his sixty battles he was victorious. He obtained six triumphs, conquered four kingdoms and added eight principalities to his dominions. Later in life he discovered the inadequacy of earthly

glories to satisfy his soul. He turned over all his dominions to his brother and son, and retired amid the solitudes of Spain to devote the remainder of his life to religion. As a personal testimony he left this final word, "I have tasted more satisfaction in my solitude, in one day, than in all the triumphs of my former reign. The sincere study, profession, and practice, of the Christian religion, have in them such joys and sweetness as are seldom found in courts and grandeur." On the fourth day of creation God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. The presence of light makes the day; the absence thereof makes the night. Such is the history of souls. There are "The sons of light" and "The sons of darkness." '"All upon whom the light of Life has shone,—all who have been effectually visited by 'The dayspring from on high,'—all who have received the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,—all such, whoever and wherever they may be, belong to the first class, are the sons of light; the sons of day."

"On the other hand, all who are still in nature's darkness, nature's blindness, nature's unbelief—all who have not yet received into their hearts, by faith, the cheering beams of the Son of righteousness, all such are still wrapped in the shades of spiritual night, are the sons of darkness; the sons of night."

We belong to one class or the other. We may be poor, ignorant and despised but if the Son of God,

the Light of the world, has come to abide in our souls, then indeed we are the sons of day, destined to reside in that celestial sphere, the glory land, in "The city that hath no need of the sun, neither the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

Some of these times we shall journey, whither going? Some of us shall walk the sun-blazed trail that leads to endless day. And some I fear will pass through the shadows into endless night. I am happy in Christ that I have found the lighted way and am companying them, who at the end of the tired day are going home.

"No darkness have we who in Jesus abide,
The Light of the world is Jesus;
We walk in the Light when we follow our Guide,
The Light of the world is Jesus.

Ye dwellers in darkness, with sin-blinded eyes,
The Light of the World is Jesus;
Go, wash at His bidding, and light will arise,
The Light of the world is Jesus."

As Rome could produce no governor to purify her courts: as no liberator could rise from within society to set her at liberty; as no priest in Jerusalem could be found to renovate the temple, so neither can there rise anything from within the heart of a man to save him from sin and set him free. The individual must look to the Light from above. No name is given under heaven whereby men are saved, other

than the name of Jesus. "He that hath the Son hath life." To have the Christ-life is to have the Christ-light. "And he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." The wrath of God abideth on him and he dwells in darkness.

THE ROUGH ROAD

THE ROUGH ROAD

"The way of the transgressors is hard." *Proverbs 13. 15.*

"Is Sin Obsolete," was the caption of an article in The Christian Century issue of November 22nd, 1923 from the pen of Dean W. R. Inge, in which he said that the disappearance of warning from the pulpit is a remarkable phenomenon. He goes on to say that the sense of sin has decayed strangely and rapidly among us. Yes, we don't hear sin preached about so much these days, and the way many of our religious journals and churches have ceased to emphasize the fact of sin, we might think sin is obsolete. But all we need to do is to look on every side of ourselves, and oft times right within ourselves, and we will find sin in all its old time hideousness present. Polite society may refuse to think about it, and the preacher may become unpopular who condemns all manners of sins, but that does not remove the fact nor the consequences of sin. Last summer in a revival meeting in the state of Minnesota I preached a sermon on "Be Sure Your Sins Will Find You Out," and after the sermon the pastor of the church in which we were holding our meeting asked me, if I were not afraid to hit sin so hard. No! And if I were I would quit the ministry. There are two things a preacher of Christ must do. Down sin and lift up the Saviour. The Old Testament

prophets and the New Testament preachers hit hard and long on sin, and so must we of today. Sin wrecked the lives of men then and it is scattering the wrecks of broken humanity all along the shores of this Twentieth Century. And we cannot afford to tone down on our preaching against it. The sins of this day as well as that day sent Jesus to Calvary. "He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities." I wish sin were obsolete. Then this would be a paradise in which to live, like the garden of Eden before Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit. The difference between heaven and hell is one is without sin and the other is full of it. In heaven the righteous are praising God; in hell sinners are cursing and blaspheming. One is just as sure as the other. If there is no hell, as some say, then there would be no heaven. Put a bunch of sinners in heaven with the saved and they would soon make a hell of heaven. You put your money in an iron safe and lock your doors because there are thieves and robbers in the country. You keep your eye on your child lest some kidnapper would steal her. You watch your boy continually for fear some old boozer will fill him with moonshine. The tough gang makes a hell of the world and they would do likewise in heaven, if they were there.

What is sin? Too frequently we deal with this question only in the abstract and get nowhere. What is sin, I ask? Let me give you some definite cases of sin. Adam and Eve did the very thing

God asked them not to do, when they partook of the forbidden tree. That was sin. The first sin of the world. It was sin because they transgressed the laws of God. Had God not told them to leave that tree alone, they could have eaten the same fruit and it would have been no sin. "Sin" says John "is the transgression of the law." It may be doing something that God tells us not to do, and it can also be, not doing what God commands us to do. God says love your enemies, and if we don't, that is sin. It is just as much a sin not to do what God tells us to do, as it is to do what He commands us to leave undone. Sins of omission and commission. "All unrighteousness is sin" John continues. Anything not in accord with the will of God that is sin, whether it is in deed or thought. Sin is placing self above the claims of God. The way of unselfishness is Godly. The way of self and self-will is sin. The man who says, I ought to do so and so, but I am going to do something else, that is sin. The son who throws over the teachings of a righteous father and mother and breaks their hearts, that is sin. The parents who fail to take time to instruct their little ones in the ways of God and allow them to grow into men and women ignorant of the Bible and the will of God, that is sin. The adult who puts temptations in the face of children, that is sin. The painted woman, who steals furtively along the streets night after night, until finally she is broken and rotten with disease, and then goes and throws herself into the

river to end it all, that is sin; only in a different form from that mentioned a moment ago. They are all sins. The man who goes out and drinks and drinks until he fills a drunkard's grave, that is sin, yet sin of another type. The slum home, or the dirty cabin, ugly foul, overcrowded, without light for eye or heart; that hut into which helpless babes are born without a chance of decency, that is sin. Individual and community sin. That which caused the cross on the Hill of the Skull, in all its misery, filth, blood and fiendishness, was sin. Sin has been and is the curse of all the ages. Sin is the most expensive, destructive and hellish thing with which humanity has ever dealt. Everywhere sin breaks hearts, hangs crepes on the doors, and builds crosses. Sin makes rough the road over which the transgressors trods. The way of the transgressors is hard. Don't tell me it is easy to live for the devil and serve him, and that it is hard to serve the great Father, who has fashioned us in His image and likeness. Jesus invites us come to Him and find rest, saying "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." It is the way of the transgressors that is hard. The Bible says so. Life proves it.

Ask men of all the ages which is the rough road of life, and they will, if they tell the truth, tell you it is the way of sin. Adam and Eve lived in a weedless garden, that brought forth fruit abundantly, and were free from care and trouble, until they sinned. Then what happened? They were driven from the

garden to the hillside and there had to make their living the best they could, fighting weeds, and filth and dirt, in order to grow food enough to supply their needs. Their lives became full of sorrow and trouble and pain and death. Before that they didn't know what an ache and a pain were. It was so then, and it is so now. Evolution hasn't effected the consequences and wages of sin. The way of the transgressors was hard and rough then, and it is now. The wages of sin then was death, death to freedom, death to peace, death to happiness, and death to man, and the sames wages are being paid today. The devil is the same old fool he has always been. He was fool enough in the first place to kick up a fracas in heaven and to get ostracised, and now he is fool enough to offer his followers nothing but a rough road over which to journey and at the end thereof the reward of death. Now, isn't that some fool of an offer? His contract with a boy is to make him a drunkard, give him a red, rummy nose, blurred eyes, loose-mouth, and so disfigure him, that in ten years his own mother who gave him birth, could scarcely recognize him, and at the end of the line hang a premature, shameful drunkard's tomb. Isn't that some bargain? Only a fool would make such an offer. Only a bigger fool would accept it. The devil is the biggest fool in hell or on earth, except the fellow who follows him. Let me illustrate. You buy a new car and you start for a ride. There are two roads. One is

a smooth highway that runs along streams and by lakes and through nature's wonderland, and brings you to the most beautiful spot on earth. The other is a rough, bumpy, crooked, rocky road, leading through filth, and dirt and slop, by the camps of cut-throats and murderers and at the end drops you over a deep chasm to death. Now a man with any sense will take the good road. That is your life. God gave us a life to make one run with it across the world. You can take the road of God and end in glory, or you can take the road of satan and end in hell. The one is the good road, the other the rough one. There are two ways to go through life. I prefer the upward road. If you wanted to cross a lake would you take a boat or attempt to swim it? I would take the boat. Why? Because it is the saner way. If you wanted to go to a distant city would you go in your car or walk? Give me the car. Why? Because that is the better way to travel. I would sooner ride than swim: sooner ride than walk. I would sooner travel on God's train through this life, than in the devil's high-powered car, because it is the safer, saner, better way. The way of the transgressors is hard.

Ask the crook if his is an easy road. The other day I heard Billy Sunday tell of a case up in one of the New England states. There was a family of three. Father, mother and little girl. The father held a responsible, financial position in a bank. Made lots of money, lived in a palatial home, and

the little girl got everything her heart desired. One day the bank examiner came along and found the funds of the bank short. A detective was put on the trail, the father was brought to trial and could not account to the court for the shortage. He was found guilty, lost his position as cashier and was sentenced to serve time in the penitentiary. The mother and daughter were forced to leave the fine home, which went to pay the bank creditors and the father went to serve out his sentence. In the cabin where the broken-hearted mother and child lived, they grew poorer and poorer until they were in want of food and raiment.

The little girl loved her father and could not believe he was an absconder and a crook. Day after day she prayed for his deliverance and return home. Ten years passed and he still served in the pen, and the little girl now growing into her teens still prayed. One day she was taken violently sick. And it was a sickness unto death. Yet she prayed for the father to come home. The neighbors came in. The doctor said, the child would die. Still she prayed for father to come. A petition was rushed to the governor of the state, giving the news of the praying child and informing him of her condition, and praying him to allow the father to come home just for an hour. The governor agreed. The father was sent home under guard. He rushed to the room of the dying child. Her eyes were closing, but when the father came to her bed-side and called

her name, she rallied long enough to put her thin arms around his neck and said, "Daddy I knew you would come to me." The guard who stood by was in tears. In a few minutes the child was gone. She fell asleep. Father and mother kneeled by the bed. The guard looked at his watch and told the father it was time to return to prison. He lingered. He took the dead child up in his arms. Again the guard informed him it was time to go. How could he leave the mother alone to bury the body? But he had to go. Don't tell me his road was easy. It was hard for him. It was hard for the mother. It had been hard for the dying child. The way of the transgressors is hard. The way of the crook is a rough way. Why should I be afraid to preach against sin, and condemn stealing, and crooked dealings, and absconding, and lying and cheating and such like, when I know what these things will do for a man? God help me to fight sin with all my heart!

Go through your prisons anywhere and ask the inmates if the transgression of the laws of the land means an easy road for them. It means broken homes, lonely hearts, and the prison.

Transgress the laws of nature and you pay the penalty. Go along without food, drink and sleep for a week, if you want to and you will be a wreck. Man can get on without eating for a while, but try to do without water and sleep. Break the laws of nature and you suffer. Next January go out to the

river, break the ice and go in bathing, and I hazard to say, you will be a corpse in two days, or at least bed-fast with pneumonia and an invalid the rest of your life. Start in eating clods for potatoes and stones for bread and see what will happen. A year or two ago the papers were telling us about William Martell, a professional swallower who went about giving exhibitions of what he could do in swallowing all kinds of things. What happened? One night in a Chicago theater, after he had swallowed a spike he was seized with peritonitis, and they rushed him to the hospital, operated on him immediately, and found in his abdomen a small size hardware store, consisting of twelve tacks, nails of assorted sizes, two iron nuts, twelve saftey pins, twenty-two paper clips, two iron washers, one dime, a can opener, and bits of glass, brick and crockery. The walls of his stomach were penetrated and he was in a serious condition. You may call him a fool, for transgressing the laws of nature, but wait a minute, what are we going to call the brother who transgresses the laws of God? Transgress the laws of God and yours is a hard road. The cursing, blaspheming, loud-mouthed ruffian of any community is branded, and good men and women refuse to associate with him and keep their children away from him if they can.

God says, "Thou shalt not steal," and I have shown you that the way of the absconder and crook and thief is a rough road.

God says to every man "Be sober," and the man

who travels the drunkard's road, goes the rough trail. The drunkard's life is the hard life. His home is the wrecked home. He sells the shoes off his baby's feet to fill himself of rot. His poor wife wears her finger nails short and scrubs her fingers thin, over an old wash-board trying to get food to keep her babies from starving. And the old sot comes home and curses her, whom he promised man and God to love, because she cannot work harder and make more money for him to drink down. Don't tell me this isn't a hard road for the wife, and children and the drunk. Did you ever visit a drunkard's home and then visit it again after he was converted? The home that was once a hut of rags, and broken chairs and broken hearts, and sad faces has been changed into a home of furniture, and carpet, and food, and clothing, and happy hearts and smiling faces. The rough road of dissipation is over and the good road of soberness and love is being traveled.

Judge Farnand sentenced Herbert Spring to life imprisonment for shooting a young woman to death when he was in a drunken rage. Spring was just a mere strip of a boy, and the woman he shot was yet younger. The judge in pronouncing sentence upon him said, "The young man who becomes an habitual drinker of intoxicating liquors is almost certain of moral death before he reaches mature manhood." The judge held up before him two pictures. The one of the home of his victim,

where had lived, a father, mother and a baby. The other the home of the criminal and his parents. They were both broken homes, wrecked and ruined by the sins of the young accused. The judge continued, "She whom you shot to death has borne for a short while that almost sacred name of mother. Her heart, which beat in love for her first born, was pierced by a bullet fired from a weapon in your hand; the breast that gave nurse to her infant child was chilled and she slept. 'My God, my baby, I am dying' were the agonizing and pathetic words which fell from the lips of your victim just before she passed into the valley where the shadows of life faded away, and the twilight of eternity broke in upon her. Under the sentence that I am about to impose upon you, you shall have ample time while in prison to think of the past and meditate on the future. Day by day, week by week, month by month and year by year until the sands have run out of the dial of your life, you shall wear the garb of a prisoner; the narrow walls of the criminal's cell shall be your abiding place. When the iron gate closes behind you the beauties of life and the grandeur of nature shall be hidden from you, and home and mother will only be memories." And the twenty year old boy was sentenced to the penitentiary at Joliet for his natural life. The first day of the imprisonment was in solitary confinement and the rest to be spent at hard labor.

The way of the transgressor is hard. Two homes were broken and hearts were sad and heavy.

Read the story of Celia Cooney, the bobbed-haired bandit of a short while ago, who was captured in Florida, for crimes committed in New York and is now serving time in the New York State Prison. About the time of the birth of her child she was captured by the officers of the law. Two days after the infant was born it died and was buried in Florida. She was never permitted to see even the baby's grave. From her prison home she wrote Dr. S. S. Sisson of Jacksonville, her former doctor, to take a picture of the tiny mound and let her have it, saying the picture would be a help to her in her hours of solitary confinement. Yes, the way of the transgressors is hard.

Ask the Prodigal Son about it, and he will tell you sin drove him to the pigsty and fed him on the husks of the barnyard.

Ask Judas Iscariot, and he will tell you sin disrobed him of his apostleship and sent him dangling from a tree on the end of rope.

Ask David, and he will tell you it broke his heart, and wrecked his home, and sent his boys astray.

Ask old Ahab, and he will tell you sin sent him to the garbage can and made him meat for the hungry dogs of the street. Sin has wrecked the body, ruined the character, destroyed the good name, and damned the soul of man. The biggest day's work the devil ever did was when he got our first parents

to sin, and thus introduced sin into the world, from which the world has never been set free. I believe it is Paul in his letter to the Romans in about the third chapter who says, "We have all sinned and have come short of the glory of God." Your sin might not be listed in the category mentioned, but look to yourself and find it. It may be the sin of adultery, lasciviousness, envyings, strife, hatred or what not. How many men are guilty of these! Unfaithfulness. Man untrue to his vows of the church. He will promise to attend its services and go off to the lakes or mountains when the Sabbath comes instead of going to the church. How many men are unfaithful, and women as well, to their marriage vows! They promised God and man to be true and then soon set forth to break their vows, and hang heavy the hearts of those who loved and trusted them. Yours may be the sin of covetousness. Whatever it is, it is sin, whether of lesser or greater degree. It is sin, not the degree of sin, that makes life miserable and hard and sends men to the lost world. The wages of sin is death, regardless of whether it is the sin of cheating, faithlessness or murder. Sin is sin. A man will go to the devil just as easy through lying as he will through drunkedness and perhaps a little sooner, for he may be more careful about drinking than he is about lying. The sin of jealousy will condemn a man on the Day of Judgment as readily as the sin of murder. It is a step in the same direction. Back of the mur-

derous act of Cain was jealousy egging him on. Had I the time I could run through the whole category of sin and locate the sin of every sinner in this house, but the hour forbears this. But whatever your sin is, just remember the way of the sinner is a rough road. The way of the transgressors is hard. It is hard because it is the way from God. Sin means the separation from God, and without God anything is hard. Try to grow vegetables in your garden without God. Let Him shut up the heavens and hold back the seasons and you will have no garden. Try to breathe and let God forget to give you your breath for a few minutes and you are gone. Any way without God is a hard way. So the sinner leaves out God; he keeps himself remote from His presence, thus his way must be hard. In Paris is a great picture from the artist Zwiller, called, "The First Night Outside of Paradise." Adam and Eve have been driven from the garden, separated from God, and are preparing to spend the first night in the desert. The angel with a flaming sword stands back at the garden gate, but the eyes of the wanderers are not on him. They are looking into the far distant future where, outlined in a faint but unmistakable way, stands a cross. In wondering awe they gaze upon it. The cross is the way of the return to God. The cross brings man and God together and there is peace and happiness and love and life. The way of the cross leads from the rough road of the trans-

gressors home to God. And there is no other way but this.

"I know a soul that is steeped in sin,
That no man's art can cure,
But I know a name, a name, a name,
That can make that soul all pure.

I know a land that is sunk in shame
Of hearts that faint and tire,
But I know a name, a name, a name,
That can set that land on fire.

I know a world completely wrecked
And writhing in its pain,
But I know a name, a name, a name
That can build that world again."

COMING TO ONESELF

COMING TO ONESELF

"And when he came to himself, he said: I will arise and go to my father." *St. Luke 15. 17, 18.*

The unsaved person is God's prodigal son. He gathered all his talents, his youth, his character, his life, and took his journey into the far country of sin away from God, the Father, and is lost from the home of his soul. The prodigal is in every community. He is here tonight. And I have come to invite him to return home to his heavenly Father who awaits him. Those of us who have left our earthly moorings know the great joy that comes when we go back to the old home and see again those we love best. In "The Romance of Religion" Dr. Lewis T. Guild tells of Cy Mason's return from the World War. Instead of the train pulling in to the station immediately with her load of soldiers, she stopped a few minutes in the lower yards of that middle western city. The mayor of the city and his officials, the bands of the city and many of the citizens were at the station to welcome the heroes home. Rather than receive this great ovation Cy Mason climbed through the window of the car and ran across the tracks and up the alley home, and gathered into his arms his old mother. Home and mother were more to him than all else combined. The one thought that can be sweeter than the

thought of our home here, is the thought of our home in that Abiding City. And no man who really takes time to think about it will care to trod in the direction that leads from it. The prodigal in this "Pearl of Parables" spoken by Jesus during his Perean ministry just a few weeks prior to His crucifixion, left home without counting the cost. Yes, he had hopes, ambitions and imaginations but he had failed to think them through. Therefore, when he got out in the world he still refused to think. Consequently he wasted his all. Foolishly spending is incompatible with thinking. Had he thought of home and how his father had labored to gain these possessions and the way he, the son, should use them, no doubt he would have invested them to some advantage and not squandered them by riotous living. I am not attempting to accuse this boy of immorality as did his elder brother, as to that I do not know, but I do know that he indulged in such pleasures that were absent of the home spirit. And he hadn't any business to so live. Yet you say it was his money. He was entitled to one-third of the estate, the younger's portion according to the standards of that day (Deut. 21. 17). But Christ condemned the way he used it. So do you and I. The sinner who squanders his talents, time and life in sin has no business to do so, either. After all was gone the prodigal came to want, the inevitable sequel of waste. Waste is always followed by want. He wanted friends but they had

rapidly scattered from him. He wanted comfort and clothing and food. Instead he found his bed, a pigsty; his clothing, rags; his food, carod pods. He was entirely lost to all good things. Lost to proper food, clothing, comforts, friends, life, joy, home, loved ones, father and himself. And the first thing he found was himself. "And when he came to himself." Christ likened him and every sinner to a man beside himself, delirious, intoxicated, unconscious and as one altogether oblivious of his surroundings. Finally the light broke and as Moffatt has it "He came to his senses." He began to think. Then he saw himself as he was. This is what every man does who comes to himself.

The late President Wilson in his book "When a Man Comes to Himself" tells us that there is no set time for a man to come to himself and that some men never come to themselves at all. They go on through life having the wrong estimations and opinions of themselves. To come to oneself is to know oneself. His limitations and short-comings as well as his capabilities and endowments. The scales have fallen from his eyes and he no longer deceives himself but soberly sees himself, as he himself is. What a fine thing for anyone to do, to come to himself! It means good-bye egotism, self-conceit and a lot of other useless luggage that so many of us tote around.

The prodigal looked at himself and saw his present status. "Who am I? I am a lonely homesick child

in a strange country. How am I dressed? In rags. What is my menu? Husks, husks, husks, that which swine would eat. What is my occupation? A feeder of swine. The lowest job that a man may do." This boy looked the actual facts straight in the face and saw them as they were. He didn't cover over a thing. He made no attempt to imagine he fared a bit better than he did. His inventory of himself was complete. It is a good thing to take stock once in a while of our own selves to see where we stand. How often do you make an inventory of your heart? How often do I?

The merchant inventories his goods annually. He checks his record with last years. Then counts his purchases and sales and thus finds if he is making or losing money. Physicians advise us to present ourselves at least annually to them that they may check over our physical condition. Many people die to-day who have no business of dying. They die because they neglected to watch up their physical condition. Then when it is too late they rush to a hospital or sanatorium and there die prematurely. Had they been concerned about themselves and found the disease before it had made its inroads why naturally they would be well to-day. Dentists advise us to come to them regularly to have our teeth looked after and kept in good shape. As a rule those of us who heed this advice display splendid teeth. Now if it is necessary in business to take stock; in health to make a physical examination,

what about making a regular moral examination to see how and where we stand in this particular? It is very unwise for us to be ignorant of our physical condition and likewise it is extremely unwise for us to be unconscious of our moral condition. If we are too busy during the day to make this examination, spend a night at this task. The late Dr. Jowett informed us this would be a night well spent. May we get right down alongside of our heart and turn over everything there is to be found and take a look at our real self and label all things as accurately as the druggist labels his poisons and medicines. Label falsehood, falsehood. Hypocrisy, hypocrisy. Self-conceit, self-conceit. Faith, faith. Love, love and so on until we have covered the whole range of the heart. Then compare with a previous inventory to see if you are gaining or losing in the moral world. Said Carlyle, "The greatest of faults is to be conscious of none." The man who is given to honest introspection cannot be named in this category. Good men of the past were given to look within. See the Psalmist as he gazes at his own heart and cries out, "Create in me a clean heart, O God: and renew a right spirit within me." The Publican in the Temple prayed "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner." "That is what I am, a sinner," said this man.

Now the prodigal saw himself not only as he was at that moment but as he once was, and further, he discovered what had caused his downfall. "Father,

I have sinned." He acknowledged the fact that he was a sinner. He was a waster, a squanderer. Every prodigal is such. Prodigal means a waster. He realized now that he had wasted foolishly all that he had once possessed. His lower self had been in control. He had started in the wrong way and kept going on and on until he landed in the barnyard. His motives were wrong. He set out to bring about the realization of the self of body, not of the soul. He chose the self of lust in the place of the self of love. He had trampled his father's teachings beneath his feet and went headlong in his own selfish quest, and made a miserable mess of it all. Had he really thought of what he was doing he could have averted this disaster. Oh the tragedy of refusing to think. If the sinners would really think of what it means to sin and its natural consequences, they would forsake their sins and return unto God. Someone said, "If I can get men to think, a conversion is almost sure to follow." Had Adam and Eve really thought the Eden ostracism might not have been. Would Judas have betrayed his Master had he first counted the cost? Had the Jews thought for themselves, I wonder if they would have had part in the crucifixion?

There was something more than this yet, that the prodigal saw. He saw what he could be. "That is what I was. This is what I am. That is what I can be," he soliloquized. "I can be at least a

servant in my father's house. They have food, clothing, comfortable beds and a shelter from the wind and storm." He knew there was something better for him than what he had. There was a life for him to live which excelled swine herding. This brought him to make the momentous decision, "I will arise and go to my father." He saw that the swinesty was no fit place for him, and he determined to get out of it. That was a great day in his life. It is a great day in the life of any sinner when he sees himself as he is, and then what he can be, and starts to realize his ideal. It is said of drunken John B. Gough, the singer and story teller in cheap theatres of New York that one day when intoxicated he was sitting in a chair by his table in his miserable little room in that great city; his head dropped over on the table and he fell into a drunkard's sleep and dreamed a dream. In his dream he heard a knock on his door. "Come in," he called. A giant came in carrying in his arms a bright, beautiful blue-eyed baby boy, fair to look upon. Asked Gough of the giant, "Who is that baby in your arms?" The giant answered, "Sir! this beautiful child is the son of a mother who named him John Bartholomew looking forward to the day when in him her fondest hopes would be realized." The visitor departed, soon to return. Again Gough called as he heard the knock, "Come in!" The giant came in in company with a great personality, fine of features, strong of character, keen of eye.

Gough whispered, "Who is that imposing personality?" The giant replied, "Sir! this is John Bartholomew as his mother hoped him to be, and as he could be." Again the giant vanished and quickly returned with that same familiar knock. Again Gough called, "Come in!" The giant came through the door holding in his great, strong hands a miserable, drunken, loose-lipped, blurred-faced derelict. "Who is that wretch," shouted Gough. The giant spoke calmly, "Sir! this is you, John Bartholomew, not as your mother wanted you to be, but as you are to-day!" Gough jumped from his chair and sprang at the wretch, crying, "Let me kill him! Let me kill him!" The start awakened him and standing in the middle of the floor of that room, he determined from that day on to be the man that he was intended to be. He later became that mighty temperance reformer whose remarkable powers of pathos and description stirred England and America for righteousness. Would to God, my unsaved friend, you could see your present status, feeding off the husks of sin, and see what you could be; be drinking from the fountain that never runneth dry. I believe could you realize that while you feed upon these husks of sin your immortal soul is starving, for they cannot surfeit that eternal longing which God the Father has put in the heart of all His creatures, you also would determine to arise and go to Him, who alone can gather His wandering child into His infinite arms of love, hush your pleadings

and give you that peace and joy which passeth human comprehension. We read in the fourth gospel, "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John." And this man had a definite work to do in preparing the way for the coming of the Messiah. You too, my friend have been sent from God with a work to do and a life to live. Are you the man you should be? Are you doing the work you have been sent to do? May I ask you again to take a long, straight look at yourself? Now answer the question in the light of your own analysis. If you are not what you ought to be, God help you to about face and start on the road that leads to service and glory.

The boy of our lesson made the resolution and then immediately he started to carry it out. He thought it through and then put it into practice. He determined to go home confessing his sins, and he went confessing. That was the only right way for him to go. It is the only way for any sinner to come to God. God cannot forgive unless we confess. He didn't blame it on his father, brother, or friend. He came crying, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. Make me as one of thy hired servants." What a contrast. He came on the scene saying "Give me" and has returned saying "Make me." That was a thorough, normal conversion. We must come humbly confessing our sins, willing to give up all past deeds and

old life and start anew in the way God directs. Make me, take me, use me in anyway Thou willest. So many people during some emotional revival will rush to the altar without thinking it through, and their decision is made as lightly as if it were written on sand, then when the first great storm of temptation comes along, it completely demolishes it. Somewhere we are warned against building on sand. May every unsaved man come to his senses, think it through, see the facts in the case, and then firmly decide, God helping him, to live and walk with the Divine Father, in whom he lives and moves and has his being. We are taught that the difficulty in carrying out resolutions is due to the fact that the sphere of practice is different from the sphere in which the resolution is made. Ethically that is true. But the Holy Spirit which enabled us to first make the resolution can also travel to the other sphere and there assist us in carrying it out. The same Spirit which prompted the decision urged the prodigal to stick by it when he came and found his father in a forgiving attitude.

This brings us to consider his reception. Do we not see the aged father standing by the front gate with far looking eyes gazing up the distant road hoping to see the wanderer come into view? Day after day he had looked in vain. The first thing in the morning and the last thing at evening the neighbors saw the father go to the gate and look, and look, and look for the boy to come. This time, as

often before, he sees a moving object appear upon the far-flung horizon. It grows larger and plainer. After a while he detects it is a man approaching on foot. The father's interest grows. Speaking with himself he says, "Can that be my boy? Perhaps it is someone bringing me word from him. No, I believe he is in rags. He must be a vagabond." Just as the father turns to go he notices something familiar about that walk. He looks and behold, he recognizes him. "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him." He didn't run to him to scold him, to say "I told you to stay home, now look at yourself," but he ran to greet and kiss him. A thousand thoughts passed through the mind of the son, but just the same, he made a full confession. With shamed face and eyes filled with tears he kept crying, "Father, father, I have sinned and am not worthy to be called your son!" Closer still closer to his great heart the father drew him with all of his rags and filth and dirt saying, "My boy! My boy!" The servants strain their eyes to see. One speaks. "Poor old master has lost his reason. He thinks that tramp is his son. He has prayed and looked and worried until it has weakened his mind."

But the father knew. He calls to the servants, "Go upstairs in my room and there in the clothes-press you will find that purple robe which has been kept for this occasion. Bring it and put it on my

boy!" The father was not satisfied to give the son an ordinary suit. He clothed him with the robe of a prince. "Servants, you will find in the top dresser-drawer, in the left hand corner, my private jewel-box. In it are several gold rings. Get the one that is wrapped in red velvet, it is the most costly, and bring it here and put it on his finger! Ring signified union. "Bring that pair of shoes from the shelf in the cloak room! The pair I have been polishing and dusting every day awaiting this time. Bring them and put them on his feet!" Servants went bare-footed but sons wore shoes. "Go down in the meadow-lot and catch that Hereford yearling; slaughter him and make ready the roast; let us eat, and be merry. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." The father more than fed the boy; he feasted him. What a difference between carob pods and roasted veal. The world gave the lad nothing but husks. The father feasted him on fatted calf. He had sought happiness and good times away from home, but the greatest joy and feast he had ever received were at father's house. He could anticipate no such wonderful reception. Why will men continue to nibble at the husks of wordly pleasures when they can feast at the banquet table of the King of kings?

Will you not, my unsaved friend, quit your wanderings and come home? When this young man came back to his father it meant, good-bye dry husks; good-bye rags; good-bye piggery; good-bye swine;

good-bye hard master; good-bye miserable life. He sounded the death knell over the wasted past and faced the homeward road of joy and blessings and happiness and love. It was a fine thing that with all of his losing the boy hadn't lost the road to his father's house. Would that all ring the death knell over their prodigality and face the path that leads home. A grand reception is awaiting. We remember the sad story of Floyd Collins imprisoned in a Kentucky cave. For weeks heroic efforts were made by neighbors and State for his freedom. The world prayed. Breathlessly we awaited the hour when the rescuing party would come to the surface with Collins alive. But when they came and announced he was dead, the heart of the world fell. Suppose they could have restored him to us alive. Transports of joy would have swept the earth. Yet, with it all, our proclamation of joy would pale into insignificance when compared to what heaven must do, when one lost in the unfathomable depths of sin is found and restored to God. Methinks, the angelic chorus sings the gladsome news through the streets of that Lifted City, until all the redeemed chant the refrain. Mayhaps, in the chorus some of us have fathers and mothers, babies and loved ones, "That we have loved long since and lost awhile," who will sing the high notes of that salvation song. Jesus told us that there was more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over the ninety-and-nine just persons, which need no repentance. I

cannot tell you all the blessings a returning wanderer receives. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." But I am authorized to invite you home and to say the Father is ready and willing to release from the cornucopia of heaven upon you blessings until you are scarcely able to contain them. He will fill your heart with everlasting joy; clothe you in His abiding love; and crown you with the Diadem of Eternal Life.

THE RENDEZVOUS WITH LIFE

THE RENDEZVOUS WITH LIFE

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." *St. John 10. 10.*

"I have a rendezvous with death,
At some disputed barricade,
When Spring comes back with rustling shade,
And apple blossoms fill the air—
I have a rendezvous with death
When Spring brings back blue days and fair,
And I to my pledged word am true;
I shall not fail that rendezvous."

So WROTE the soldier-poet Alan Seeger, a few days before he made the supreme sacrifice for his country. He was killed in action at Belloy-en-Santerre, July 4th, 1916, and hastened to his rendezvous with death.

We, too, shall have a rendezvous with death. We may not hold it upon a blood-stained battle-field of a world's war; we may not be summoned to meet it amid the heartless waters of a submarined sea; yet, we cannot fail that rendezvous. Some will be called to face it while the blood of youth courses the veins. Others not until time has placed his imprint upon the brow. To some it will come in the early morning while the dew is fresh upon the roses. To others it will come when the earth is swathed in the stillness of night. Death will call some from the

field; some from the store; some from the office; some from the shop. For others it will tarry and call them from the fireside, the wheel-chair or the bed of pain. Somehow, sometime, somewhere we cannot fail the rendezvous with death. It is the way of all the earth. Where are the fathers and mothers of yesteryear? They have held their conference with death and have passed on. A month ago, I rode with my wife in the first car following the hearse to the cemetery, where we buried the body of her brother, a young man just forty years of age. Four days later we took the same place in line and buried the body of her father, a man who had passed his three score years and ten. Some day our loved ones shall take their places in the funeral train and follow our bodies to that quiet city of the dead.

The Rendezvous with Death is a challenging subject upon which it may be well to dwell, but our text suggests that we ponder upon another theme, another rendezvous. A rendezvous just as important and, I hazard the assertion, far more challenging. It is, The Rendezvous with Life. We cannot fail to keep our rendezvous with death. Every twenty three seconds somebody dies in the United States. In the next twenty-four hours 3754 persons will pass out into eternity. During the coming year 1,370,545 persons will step out and meet death. But we can fail to keep our rendezvous with life. Not that we shall put an end to our

earthly existence, do I mean. There are thousands and thousands who exist, but who are not really living. They are eating, and drinking and making merry, and yet have never discovered the true meaning of life. They may think they are enjoying the sweetness of living. But there is a great gulf fixed between making a good living and living a good life.

The Greeks above the entrance of their great temple wrote these words, "Know thyself." Do we know ourselves? Have you ever wandered alone amid the solitudes of your own life? Let us close the door of the world for a moment and have a rendezvous with life. "Hello life! You are a mysterious intruder that is hard to understand. I didn't send for you. You didn't come by my asking. Nor by my choosing. I have had nothing to do in bringing you into this body of mine. You fixed your own date and came at your own time without consulting me about it. Furthermore, I understand you are going to leave this old body of mine when it pleaseth you and I have nothing to say in this matter. Now life where did you come from?" Have you ever asked yourself that question? If some stranger would drop into our home, as strange and as mysterious as life itself, the first thing we would cry out is, "WHO ARE YOU? WHERE ARE YOU FROM?" I have asked life this question, and I have searched the histories, sciences and philosophies of the world for an answer, and none have

satisfied me. I still cried out, LIFE, WHERE DID YOU COME FROM? Then I turned to this great Book of books and I read that I have been created in the image and likeness of God and He breathed into me the breath of life and I became a living soul. I am satisfied. Life from God!

The Rendezvous with Life necessitates The Rendezvous with God. And in God I live and move and have my being.

Then came His only begotten Son into the world, not that I might only have life, but that I might have it to the full. Jesus here acquaints us with His mission on earth and says, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Gamaliel Bradford in his book, "Bare Souls" comments on Horace Walpole, a man who had squandered his existence and forgot to really live, and says, "If we were made for any purpose, it seems as though we were made to live really." To really live we must possess the abundant life here spoken of by our Lord. "He that hath the Son hath life: and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. For to be carnally minded is death: but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Forbes Robinson onewhere puts it, "You are born to be a saint, and you'll be wretched until you are one." The abundant life is a Christ-like life. Lived as He lived. A year or two ago, Dr. Hulme in his sermon to the young ministers of the British

Methodist Conference made this significant statement, "I don't see how a man can be a great human unless he is a saint, and by that I mean Christ-like, for Jesus was the greatest of all humans."

Abundant life, yea the Christ life, is one of progress. Among the first things we hear about Jesus is His growth, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." He was born an infant. He was crucified in the prime of manhood. The Christian must grow in grace and in knowledge of Christ. The glory of life is growth. If you are troubled when you discover that your child's mind refuses to develop, how much more troubled God must be when His children refuse to grow in Spirit and in Truth. Oh the tragedy of remaining "Babes in Christ." If we are no better Christians this year than we were a year ago, our lives this year have been miserable failures. If we are no more like Jesus now than we were a month ago, God pity us.

"The lightning bug is brilliant,
But he hasn't any mind;
He travels all around the world
With his headlight on behind."

But the Christian is not to look backward, but to look ahead, and press on and upward toward the mark for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus. We are to forget those things which are behind, and

reach forth unto those things which are before. With Browning I say, "Man was made to grow, not to stop." What makes a man a good artist, a good writer, a good speaker? Practice. What develop the biceps? The muscles of the arm? Exercise. If the muscles are not exercised they will not develop. If the Christian does not exercise himself in the service of the Master he will be a weakling. The muscles of the soul require exercise to become strong, as truly as the muscles of the arm. Practice makes perfect in Christian living as well as in other fields of endeavor. The disciple cannot grow unless he practices what his Lord taught.

This brings me then to think on a life of love. To really live, is to really love. Everywhere Jesus insisted by word and example to love God with all that we are and our neighbor as ourselves. We cannot hold a rendezvous with life without seeing God. Neither can we have a rendezvous with God, without coming face to face with love, "For God is Love." And to be like Him, these hearts must abound in love. If, as we said, the glory of life is growth; the beauty of life is love. What is the biggest thing upon which the human mind might ponder? What is the greatest truth that passes man's comprehension? Not the great starry hosts which appear in full regalia night after night in the heavens to catch the searching eye of the astronomer. Not the appalling wideness of human needs. Not the tremendous fact of the potency of sin. There is

something more majestic than the heavens which declare the glory of God. There is something more pervasive than human need which seeps from every heart. There is something more abounding than sin which lifts itself on every side. The biggest thing with which the mind of man may deal, is the love of God which passeth knowledge. Paul runs through the catalogue of things that are suppose to abide and marks them thus; "Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail. Whether there be tongues, they shall cease." Mothers then wanted their boys to be prophets and speak with tongues. What gifts! But they have failed. They have ceased. Prophecies stand until they are fulfilled and then their work ceases, save for the increasing of one's faith. The tongue in which our text was spoken, and our lesson was written is obsolete. The Apostle continues, "Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." The wisdom of the ancient is discarded. We are advised to go through our libraries ever so often and burn the books of science and philosophy which were written ten years ago. Their knowledge has vanished. Paul didn't take time to enumerate money, fortune, popularity and fame. These were not worthy of his consideration. He succinctly dealt with the things that looked larger in the eyes of men, and then with the stroke of his pen brushed them aside, to dwell upon the things that were eternal. "And now abideth faith, hope and love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

Love abides. It never faileth. It is eternal. God and love are synonymous. That is what God is. He is love. And He pours out His love upon all His creatures. The rich and the poor alike. The learned and the unlearned. His love is not too great for the mendicant; not too small for the king. Like the sun which is sufficiently large so as he can color and beautify the mighty ocean and yet not not too large to paint and glisten the tiny dew-drop. Jesus placed this distinguishing mark upon His disciples. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one towards another."

The abundant life, is the life that is abundant in love. "He lives most, who loves most" is a truth. Analyze your life. When have you lived the most? It was when you loved the most. In a cemetery at New Orleans there is a monument that has caused much interest. It represents a ship in the midst of a storm-tossed sea. A mother and child are clinging together on the vessel. A word on the monument informs us that the mother and child perished at sea July 4th, 1900. They were the sole survivors of a large estate, and it was difficult for the court to determine in whose name the estate should be administered. The court finally decided in favor of the child. They thought as long as a mother could lift her weakened arms she would hold her child above the waters and perish first herself. Yes a mother's love would do that for her own.

But as Christians we are called to go farther. Not only love our own but even our enemies, those who despitefully mistreat us for His name's sake. Nothing short of this is an abundant life, abundant in love. The cure for the world's ills is love. We are not in need of more wealth. Not in need of more inventions and discoveries. Not in need of more science and learning. Not in need of more World Courts. We are in need of more love. Love in the home is the cure for divorce. Love in the church is the remedy for strife and division. Love in the world is the solvent for our International disturbances. Oh, for a rendezvous with love.

The Rendezvous with Love brings the Rendezvous with Service. Through love God sent. Through love Christ came. And He was sent and came to serve. Because of love the mother leaves her warm bed and walks the floor all night with her sick baby in her arms. The nurse may do it for money but she will soon tire. The mother does it for love's sake and never wearies. Love cannot fail.

May we chat again with life? "Hello life! Why are you here? For what purpose are you?" Do you hear the answer? Live to serve, and not to be served. Its one purpose is service. If the glory of life is growth; if the beauty of life is love; surely the purpose of life is service. For no other purpose did God give it. Where is the virtue in just living? We are not here just to breathe so much air. Con-

sume so much food. Wear out so many suits of clothing. To occupy so much space. "Life is more than meat. The body more than raiment." All men have been born for a specific purpose. Wesley lived to save Christianity from form and ceremony, and make religion a vital, living force in the hearts of men. Luther lived to free the church from bigotry and sweep in the mighty Reformation. John the Baptist lived to announce the arrival of the Messiah and lay the foundation of a new kingdom. Jesus Christ lived to give life, abundant life to all. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." In "One Increasing Purpose" by Hutchinson he tells us that the only life worth while is that which has Christ as "The Common Denominator." Now Christ was our greatest servant. He announced that He came not to be served, but to serve. The Christ-like life of to-day must be one of unfaltering service. There are bodies housing dead souls that refuse to serve, but the body that temples the Christ Spirit must be one that is willing to be spent in service. Life is not measured by years. It is measured by deeds. You may live to be a hundred, but if the world isn't better because you have lived in it, you have failed to really live. Too many times we are worried more over zero weather, than we are over zero accomplishments for God and man. It is said, "Life is a bank. We open an account at birth. The bank is just, and it pays interest only on our savings. We can only

draw out of life what we have put into it. No more and no less." Again to really live is to really serve. Christ taught and practiced it. All His followers have served. All great men are servants. For it is only through service men become great. Nobility serves. He is greatest of all who serves the best of all. The best doctor is he who serves the best. The best pastor is he who serves the best. The best man is the best servant. It is reported that the Prince of Wales was going through an army hospital visiting the wounded and came to a cot whereon was lying a soldier whose face was covered with a sheet. He asked the nature of the case and was informed that the wounded man had lost his jaw in battle. He asked the doctor to see him. The doctor told him, the shattered face was such a hideous sight, that it would be well for the Prince not to see it. The English heir said, "I desire to see him!" The doctor lifted the cover. A tear stood in the eye of the nobleman and then he stooped and kissed the cheek of the suffering man and passed on. A noble thing to do.

"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing shall take heart again."

We live to make the road easy for others to travel. A French physician sometime ago suggested a monument be built to the memory of Jesus as the greatest teacher and most proficient brother of man. We have been erecting monuments to the memory of statesmen, heroes and even preachers. But we have forgotten to think about setting up a marble shaft in honor of our Lord. A stone in memory of Jesus! Can you imagine it? I wonder of what the doctor thinks the innumerable churches scattered over a world remind us. Of whom do the millions upon millions of Christians speak? The best way to remember any great teacher is to practice what he teaches. Jesus is not looking for stones to honor Him. He is calling for human beings to have a rock faith in Him and by their lives, deeds and services, make the world remember Him, whom they love and worship. He didn't ask us to set up a stone slab for His glory but He did say, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Our French brother would do much more to perpetuate the memory of our Saviour, if he would forget the thought of the monument, and become so filled with the Christ Spirit that everywhere he goes he would by his life and service bring men to know the Christ, whom to know aright is life eternal. This is the purpose of life. Serving God and man. And he who really serves, really lives.

In the early part of this sermon we learned that

life came to us at will, and we had nothing to do or say in the matter, and further that life will leave this body at its own good time, and we have nothing to say as to when that time shall be. Brethern, I throw out the question to you. Tell me, if you will, the day and the hour when you are going to say your last farewell and begone! Not one of us can answer that interrogation. This very life that has been housed in this clay will as mysteriously depart as it came. The body then will return to the ground, "earth to earth" but is that the end of life? Have we just played a little game along with the ants? Have we only sung a little song with the birds? Have we only built a little home beside the squirrel's nest? And it is all over in a day? Our Master in our text has it different. It does not read, I am come that they might die, and that they might be eternally dead, but, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Men are born not to die (Spiritually speaking) but born to live, and live, and live forever.

"Tell me not in mournful numbers
Life is but an empty dream,
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real and life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal,
Dust thou art to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul."

And he who has held his rendezvous with life in this world; a rendezvous with abundant life, and was abundant in progress; abundant in love; abundant in service; and in passing let me add abundant in faith, will surely hold a rendezvous when the mists have rolled away, and he has laid aside this robe of flesh, and his soul goes back to God who gave it. This time it will be The Rendezvous with Eternal Life. This hope I can only hold out, however, to them who have lived the abundant life here. I read of two men. One man lived as if real living were to live in a palace surrounded with every luxury. He rode in gold-trimmed chariots, having horses wearing silver-plated harness to draw him. Armies moved at his command. A retinue of servants attended him. A thousand wives and concubines lived to charm and please him. But one day he was old and decrepit and his life on earth was about ended. He called a servant to bring his quill, so he might write a word for the world to remember. And this is what he wrote, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity," and he died.

But hear the story of the other man. He lived to love and to serve. He forgot self in thinking of God and his fellow-man. His service led him through peril, toil and pain. He was shipwrecked, beaten with rods, imprisoned and finally beheaded. But antecedent to his decapitation, this old hero of the cross, whose hair was blanched by the touch of time, whose shoulders were drooping under the burdens of

service, wanted to leave a word for the world to remember. He took his quill in hand and this is what he wrote, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me on that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." And Paul died. No! He passed out into Eternity for his Coronation. What had made the difference in the viewpoint of these two old men? Solomon left this world apparently sorry he had lived. The Apostle left this world rejoicing that he was going to live on and on. The one had lived for self. The other had lived for Christ. The one had failed to really live, and love and serve. The other had really lived and invested his all in his service. Keep Life's Rendezvous here, and we shall have a Rendezvous with Life in all of its sweetness and love, when we shall move out to dwell with the great Life-giver. John of Patmos and Revelations tells us, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." This, then, is the Abundant Life. Abundant in this world; and Eternal in the world to come. Thank God, that we have lived in this life. Thank God, more so, for the pleasing prospects of an Eternal Life, when we cast off the cables that have anchored us to the earth.

THE QUITTERS

THE QUITTERS

"And Terah Died in Haran." *Gen. 11. 32.*

It is a good thing for humanity and the kingdom of God when some people die. And this is true of more than people on the outside of the church. Frequently we find some old antiquated brother, who has been the ruling power for years in the local church, still unable to see visions, refusing to advance with any forward movement of his church and doing all in his power to impede the progress of God's cause. I was once appointed to a field where a new church building was sadly needed. They had been talking of building there for some eight or ten years before our arrival, but could never agree on the plans. The presiding elder was tired of their fooling and he informed me that he wanted me to go there and build the plant. My recent experiences in France helped me to say to him, I will build that church or "bust." I did better than I anticipated. I did both. About a week or two after I landed I looked up the chairman of the building committee, yes they had a building committee but the committee had never built anything, and I asked him the trouble. He acquainted me with the fact that they had a few old fossils who opposed every move suggested. I said, well let us get our heads together, decide on what we should have here, and then make a united

drive on the committee. He complied. But we found some of the folk not of the complying kind. They did their level best to frustrate our plans, but we kept hammering along, raised a big part of the money in cash and subscription, gave out the contract, and soon had a seventy thousand dollar building under construction. Every day some old-timer would come along with his same thread-bare story of yesterday and inform us, and that not too gently, that the old house of worship was plenty good enough for his father and it was plenty good enough for him. Some people seem to enjoy living in the past. It's a sad thing for any church or community to be burdened with people who have no vision. One of the best blessings that can come to that church or community is when the good Lord calls such brethern on. Then His people are free to carry on His work and move forward His Divine cause. I believe it was Walter Rauschenbusch who said, "The greatest known force for progress is DEATH."

Take the case of Terah. One day God looked out of heaven and found the descendants of Noah busy formulating plans for amalgamation and about the time they got together God confused their language and dispersed them to the four corners of the world to populate and inhabit the whole earth. Terah and his family lived in Mesopotamia. By some manner of means, according to the Acts of the Apostles, God communicated to this family that

He wanted them to get out of the idolatrous city of Ur in the land of the Chaldees and go to the greatest country on earth, the Promised Land. Terah got his family together, said good-bye to his old friends, and started. That was a magnificent thing to do. To start for Canaan. He was leaving behind him idolatry, corruption, wicked associates for his family, and he was headed toward the land that afterwards flowed with milk and honey, God's own favorite place to meet with His people. About the end of the second day's journey they came into the land of Haran. This was a beautiful and restful spot. They pitched tent for the night. The next morning Terah looks around and is more or less charmed with the outlook and is satisfied to live there. He comes in and breaks the news to the boys not to pack up for his is about decided to stay right where he is. That was a sad thing to do. A sad thing to be half way to Canaan and refuse to go farther. Perhaps Abram, who had directly received the message from God to go to Canaan, spoke to the father and endeavored to persuade him to break camp and move on. Be that as it may Terah tarried in Haran. Just why, we cannot say. Perhaps, he thought the land was too inviting to leave. Perhaps, he felt too old to go on farther. He was up in years quite a bit. Then again perhaps he meant to stop here for a while and then go on later. So many people do this. Later on they will do so and so. People, some people anyhow, will put off salvation

until some other day. Regardless of what he meant to do, Terah remained in Haran until he died. "And the days of Terah were 205 years: and Terah died in Haran." As Luke tells us in the seventh chapter of the Acts, his son Abram was free to march over to Canaan just as soon as his father passed away, and on he went. Just think of it, that one man, Terah, was holding up all God's plans for His people. God was waiting over in Canaan to receive the family, which was to become the most distinguished family of all times, out of which a great nation was to be born, and by which all the families of the earth were to be blessed, and one man held up the whole procession. No wonder he died. God could be bothered no longer. He was getting anxious to have a chat with man. So when Abram reached Canaan he found God who appeared unto him and said to him, "Unto thy seed will I give this land." God blessed him. And blessed them that blessed him and cursed them that cursed him. And God made him the father of the faithful and of the righteous. And Abram became the friend of God, and God made his seed as innumerable as the dust of the earth, which no man can number.

Whether Terah lived only five years as some think in Haran or a longer time, the tragedy of it all was, he died in Haran. Died in the place where he had no business to die. A man who has started for the Promised Land ought to be ashamed to loiter along and die on the outside. How prone we are to take

lower ground than that which the Divine Call would set before us. God had called him to Canaan and he came to Haran and remained there until death. Haran, later known as Charran, was still in the land of idolatry and fire worship, and Terah could still worship here according to his ancestrial traditions. Just think of a man worshiping fire and idols, when he was privileged to talk, and walk and live with the great Creator who tossed the stars into space, who measures the waters in the hollow of His hand, and who builds innumerable worlds for His pleasure. Truly one so easily satisfied is not worthy of a better epitaph on his tombstone than that which the Scriptures gave him, "Terah died in Haran. Age two hundred and five years."

Terah might have written his name in great letters on the sacred pages of Biblical history as the father of the seed of Christ had he followed the call of God. God had planned great things for the human race from this family. Out of here was to come the Law-Giver of the ages; the greatest king of Israel, The Master Teacher of the ages, the Son of God. Terah lost all the honor; his faithful, forward looking son gained it all. We trace it back to Abraham and no further. Why did the father lose out? Just because he didn't finish what he started. And likewise thousands are losing out today.

Someone said that the world was divided into two classes. The good and the bad. Another said, that we have the rich and the poor, the learned and the

unlearned, the aristocrats and the plebeians, the bigbugs and the little ones. In reality there are three classes.

First. The people who never start to amount to anything. We have a few folk right in our town who have never started to live for God.

The second class are the Terahs, the folk who start but stop before they reach Canaan. They make a fine beginning but stop short of the prize. The Twentieth Century is full of quitters. We have more quitters on our hands, I fear, then we have finishers. The senior class of a college is always smaller than the freshman class of four years ago. A very small number is graduated from our high schools in comparison to the number which enrolled. When I was a boy the neighbor, whose farm adjoined ours, started to white-wash his barn. He white-washed a part of one side, and then turned to another side and whited a part of it, and then quit. My mother said that was a bad sign. It was a bad sign to start a thing and not finish it. We know some folk who have started well on their Centenary pledges, and Christian education pledges and other pledges to God for His Church; paid the first few payments on them and then quit, as if they were no further obligated. That is a bad sign. And it will be worse than a bad sign when they have to face God and explain to Him why they had lied to Him. The pulpit is not without her quitters. Men have been called to the ministry and have made a good start

only to forsake it, as if they were free to disobey the Divine Call. God pity such. It is a terrible thing to start for Canaan and stop in Haran and die there. Out of the hundreds who have started to glory, as the results of the wonderful revivals which we have held so recently in this church, there will perhaps be some who will get to loitering around in Haran. I pray God there be but few such. And I would there be none. For your soul's sake keep going ahead. Don't stop! God's plan is to keep everything moving. The blossom on the tree cannot remain there. It changes into fruit. The waters in the rivers must find the sea. The earth must revolve about the sun, to catch the warmth and light therefrom, that nature might live. Suppose this old globe stopped in her course, with the sun on yonder side of us. We would be in eternal darkness and everything would die. Did you ever ride a bicycle? In order to keep it upright you have to keep going. Stop and it will fall over everytime. Just as soon as a Christian gets to loafing on the job he is sure to fall into temptation. We must keep working for God and thereby grow in knowledge and in grace. On that great day who would want to stand in the presence of God a tiny, puny, shriveled, undeveloped soul? I would sooner wear a small body in this life than be a small soul in eternity. It is God's way for a baby to grow physically. We don't expect a baby to be born a full grown man or woman. It is born an infant and grows into a full grown person.

The thing that follows birth is growth. We make much ado, and that rightly, about the second birth. Jesus told Nicodemus there was no other way into the kingdom, but by birth. There is no other way to get into this world, except that way. Everyone here in this house, came into this world by birth. Even Jesus had to come over this avenue. Likewise you will not find a soul in God's kingdom unless he is born into it. Now we ought to make as much ado about growth in the Spiritual world as we do in the physical. The order is the same. After birth then growth. If the mother's loving heart is broken when she discovers that her baby's body is stunted and will not grow don't you believe that God's great heart of love is broken when He sees His children remaining pygmies? Children capable of developing into stalwart souls. Bishop McConnell is right. "Many Christians are still-born. They never add anything to the range of ideas and practices, which were theirs at the time of their entrance into the Christian life." Yet we sing, "More about Jesus would I know," and what are some of us doing to know more about Him? If we read a chapter from the Bible a day and gather our family about us for a little prayer, we console ourselves with the thought that we are doing a whole lot. I agree that some folk do better than this and utilize every effort to know Him more, but I also must say, some people who claim to be Christians fail to do even this much. If you want to know Jesus, let us get this book (Bible) into

our heads, and hearts and lives, and practice what He practiced and be like Him. Jesus when on earth grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man. We believe a man's usefulness is over when he refuses to grow mentally. It is a sad day when a man pulls down the curtain over his mind and refuses to learn anything further. But it is all the more sad when a man quits growing in the things of God. You have heard it said, that satisfaction is a wonderful thing. To feel satisfied about some things may be perfectly right. To be satisfied about other things is altogether wrong. To be satisfied with God and His plan of salvation is fine. To be satisfied with self and self's accomplishments is anything but fine. We should have a desire to know more than we know; to do more than we do; to be better than what we are. The preacher who preaches good enough to suit himself is a failure for Jesus. After one of the greatest sermons Spurgeon ever preached some of his friends went into his study and found him, with his face buried in his hands, weeping because he was unable to preach the sermon that was lodged in his soul. After Raphael had painted his masterpiece, "The Madonna," he slipped out of his studio and cried until his heart nearly broke because he could do no better. Yet, a greater picture of that subject has never been painted. Find the best Christian on earth, and you will find one stretching forth his hands trying to get closer and closer to God. It is the wee runt who

struts around exclaiming, "I have reached perfection. I am all that I can be!" God help such. It is a terrible thing to live and die in Haran and be satisfied with it. The converts of this past meeting today should be better Christians than they were the night following their conversion, and they should know more about Jesus and love Him more now than then. Tomorrow we should be farther ahead in our Christian life than we are now. The Christian life that I am to excel is not the life my neighbor is living for Christ but the life I have lived for Him until now. May we never lose the desire to excel our lives of yesterday. The preacher that I am to excel in preaching is not my preacher friend, perhaps this could never be, but to do what is always possible, excel my preacher self. The preacher better die than lose the desire to eclipse his own preaching. No Christian has ever back-slidden who kept growing and going. The devil fails when he tries to floor such. It is rather difficult to shoot a rifle ball through the eye of a moving squirrel but let him stop, and a good shot can decapitate Mr. Squirrel at the first crack of the gun. Let a Christian stop growing and going and Mr. Lucifer tumbles him before his weapon of temptation every time. Our great church hymns are marching hymns. Never do we sing, "Sit down and take your ease, there is nothing to do." They go,

"Onward Christian Soldiers marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus going on before."

Then again,

> "Forward! forward! 'tis the Lord's command,
> Forward! forward! To the promised land;
> Forward! forward! let the chorus ring:
> We are sure to win with Christ, our King."

This will put us in the third class; the ones who finish what they start. They are the backbone of the world. And the people who honor God and whom God can honor. He honored and blessed Abram and He will always reward the faithful. Neither God nor man can praise a quitter. What government would decorate a soldier who rushed to the battle field, fired one shot, and in the heat of the conflict, left the field and returned to his barracks? What farmer would pay a man to plow a field, if the plowman made one furrow around the field and quit? What school would award a diploma to the student who failed to complete the course of study? Could we expect God to reward the one who started to follow Him but stopped short of the goal? Everyone is intended to march on to the end of the way. I don't believe there is such a thing as getting too old to move on. Perhaps Terah used this as an excuse to die in Haran. Frequently, we hear aged people say that they are too old or too hard of hearing to go to church. Men resign as superintendents of Sunday schools, as teachers of classes and what not pleading old age and aver they have done their share for the church. This is certainly wrong. The day

may be far spent for them, but that is no sign that they have nothing to do. It may not be in any official capacity in the church, but they have some definite work to do, and are yet to grow and go for God. Even the bed-ridden invalids at home can do something for the Lord, and often, although they may not know it, they are the greatest blessings to the community in which they live. God has something for everyone who remains on earth to do, and as soon as he finishes his tasks here, God is going to call him to higher services. It is not His purpose to have anyone sit around in ends of days doing nought for Him. At evening-time on the day of the Resurrection Christ found two tired and troubled men going to Emmaus to abide and rest there. Not knowing Jesus when He met them, they invited Him to join them in their rest. They said, "Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." In other words, it is too late to do anything, let's take it easy. That was not Christ's way. He stopped with them only long enough to make Himself known and He was gone. Now the question is, was the day ended for them? No! It was, so to speak, just beginning. They forgot all about going to bed and that same hour they made ready to return to Jerusalem with the news. Read it in a few verses ahead of where we read about their thinking of resting, "And they rose up that same hour, and returned to Jerusalem." Whenever men find Jesus, night is turned into day, evening-time into morning,

and men go from rest and sorrow, to labor and joy. For joy comes through service. And everlasting joy comes only after we have served unto the end. What soldier wants to die in the heat of the conflict? He will bandage his wounds, and if possible rush on with his command until the victory is won and then he will summon all the remaining strength in his bleeding form to shout, "Hurrah!" then lies down and dies in peace. Paul had it right. In the middle of the conflict hear him. "But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." And he kept pressing on until he reached the end. He was not a quitter. He went on until he gained the summit. Then as he reached out to clasp the hand that was wounded for him, and now was extended to draw him faultless in the presence of His Glory with exceeding joy, he looked back to catch one glimpse of that long journey which extended from the Damascus road to Rome. That is the time to look back when you come to the end and not before. No runner can pick up speed if he keeps looking back. So at the end Paul looked back and found that in Christ he had fought his fight to a finish. He had finished his course and had kept the faith. And there was joy in his soul. He went all the way. Jesus went all the way. Had He stopped in Gethsemane He would have been a failure. Had He gone so far as to

endure the crown of thorns and the miserable scourging, and the carrying of the cross until He staggered and fell beneath its weight, then called a halt to it all by refusing to grace the cross which He carried, Jesus Christ, Son of God, could not have been the Saviour of the world! Only as He stood at the end of the way, could He say of Himself, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do!" It was not until the last drop of blood was given that He was able to say, "It is finished." Yes, everything was done. All the thorns along the highway over which He had trod had been plucked, and all the flowers had been planted. He didn't need to ask God for an hour to go back and pull a few thorns He had missed and sow a few flowers He had failed to plant. All was done. There were no harsh words to be recalled and no kind ones remained unspoken. He was ready to step from the cross into glory and be with the Father. Too many put off until the dying day to right their wrongs and to do good. Dying is big enough in itself without having to bother with any side lines or issues. When that eventful day shall come to me, and my soul shall experience the greatest thrill that it has ever felt; when it casts aside its fleshly garments and robes itself in immortality, to stand in the presence of God; I want nothing to do that hour but to go to meet my Maker. I want everything else out of the way. It will not be good for us, if we have enemies

to call in with whom we must be reconciled. So let us pull the thistles and scatter the flowers now; finish the work which is ours to do, and go on to Canaan.

VALUING THE HUMAN SOUL

VALUING THE HUMAN SOUL

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" *St. Mark 8. 36.*

The late William Jennings Bryan in that splendid book, "In His Image," shows us that it is within the range of human possibilities for a man to earn the immense sum of five hundred million dollars, and allows a working period of thirty-three and one-third years. Mr. Ford has demonstrated that this was possible even in less time. Money is the desire of the ages. Everywhere men wish they were rich. The young spend themselves for it. The old still reach forth their trembling hands to grasp it. The poor strive to become rich. The rich still work to become richer. In "The Mine with The Iron Door" Harold Bell Wright tells of the men who braved the dangers and endured the hardships of desert and mountains to find a pot of gold in the Canada del Oro. These men, kissed their families good-bye, sacrificed the pleasures of home life, faced the storms of winter just to gain a pocket full of money. Their dreams were dreams for gold. Their hopes were hopes for gold. Their sufferings were sufferings for gold. They thought that gold was power and honor and happiness and love and life. For gold Martha's father bought rich mining lands. For gold Sonora Jack sold himself to crime. It is so

everywhere. For money some men will scheme and cheat and lie. For money some men will steal. And some will go so far as to commit murder for gold. Daily our newspapers bring this to our attention. The love of money has sent many a man to prison and to death. For a little bag of silver Judas, a chosen disciple, sold his Master and rushed to a suicidal grave. For wealth Ahab sold himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord. For a little cash a bandit will hold up a bank and shoot the cashier.

"Gold, gold, gold,
Hard and yellow, bright and cold;
Loved by the young, pursued by the old
To the very verge of the church-yard mould;
Price of many a crime untold,
Gold, gold, gold!"

However, money itself is not a curse. The love for money, regardless of whether we possess it or not, is the root from which evil springs. Money rightfully acquired, properly used, is a blessing. It sends food to the orphans; clothing to the fatherless; comfort to the homeless. The money we sent to the Near East Relief Cause was a benison to those suffering, helpless children. Yes, it was life itself to them.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century out in San Francisco a most unusual thing happened. The United States mint turned out a large issue of gold coins with the legend, "In Gold we trust" rather

than the conventional one, "In God we trust." The introduction of the letter "L" created such a stir that the whole issue was remelted and restamped with the proper wording "In God we trust." Look at that piece of money in your pocket and you will find that is what it says. But, I have found some folk who pride themselves on the fact that they don't believe in God and, yet, are everlastingly on the job trying to get as many pieces of silver and gold bearing these words as they possibly can. What inconsistency! That one should either change his faith or throw his money on the junk pile. But with our pockets full of money and our trust in God, we will so use that money that it will become a blessing to us and to the world.

I know something better than money. It is youth. You may wish to be John D. Rockefeller if you please. I prefer being a young methodist preacher at a small salary (as far as money goes) and have the years ahead of me, between my present age and eighty-six than be Mr. Rockefeller with all of his millions along with his years and infirmities. God forgive me if I am envious. Envy doesn't always pass me by. A millionaire can have his millions and they will trouble me none; but when I see a freckled-face, bare-foot boy wading in the stream, how my heart leaps and I wish I were a boy again. Don't censure the woman advanced in years, who makes a desperate fight to regain her youth. Let her bob her locks, and dye her hair,

powder her nose and paint her colorless cheeks and go to the beauty shop to have the wrinkles ironed out, if she will. Let the man who has been accustomed to wearing a mustache, now for fear of looking old shave it off, and let the bald headed brother have a wig fitted to his head. Then pay them the compliment of guessing them ten or twenty years younger than they really are. Sure we all want to be young. Youth is better than barrels of silver and gold.

> "Oh, talk not to me of a name great in story;
> The days of our youth are the days of our glory;
> And the myrtle and ivy of sweet two-and-twenty
> Are worth all your laurels, though ever so plenty.
>
> What are garlands and crowns to the brow that is wrinkled?
> 'Tis but as a dead-flower with May-dew besprinkled.
> Then away with all such from the head that is hoary!
> What care I for wreaths that can only give glory?"

I heard of a man ninety years of age receiving a fortune of several million dollars. Being so old and feeble his money was practically useless to him. But, suppose he could have fallen heir to youthhood what a blessing he would have received. Youth is something vastly better to have than much fine gold. To the one who cannot or will not use it a sack of gold is as worthless as a sack of glittering pebbles. Puerility is the real blessing.

But, I know something better than youth. It is good health. I would rather have good health at

three score years and ten than be bed-ridden at thirty. What are riches compared to health? Where is there a wealthy man whose health has failed him who would not spend all to regain what he had lost? Surely any afflicted young man would exchange places, if it were possible, with one older than he who enjoys good health. Thomas Tiplady writing in The Methodist Recorder, a London Publication, of a year or two ago tells of a lady, who at the dinner table winning the right over him to wish by the wish-bone contest, wished for a new body. "Wouldn't it be lovely," she said, "to have a brand-new body?" A good sound body, regardless of age, is a wonderful blessing. From an investigation made by the National Industrial Conference Board a report on the Workmen's Compensation Laws was published giving us the legal value of the members of a workman's body. In New York State the court in the case of an employer's negligence would allow the workman who lost an eye the sum of $2,357.76. A hand $4,494.43. An arm $5,747.04. A foot $3,776.00. A leg $5,104.96. A thumb $1,105.20, and so on. Other states have different prices. But whatever they pay, money cannot take the place of the lost member. Who would willingly trade his eye for a couple thousand dollars? It is no easy thing to go through life with a body that is halt and maimed and one that is constantly requiring patching and doctoring. It isn't very pleasant to go to a table loaded with good things un-

der orders from your doctor confirmed by inside information not to eat this, and not to eat that and so on. Good health is something for which we should thank God, who furnishes us with a new supply every day. Babson tells of himself in his book, "Enduring Investments" that he worried and was more or less overworked and having a headache went into a drug store to get some aspirin. Tom West, the druggist, said to him with some emphasis before the word fool, "Babson you think you are prosperous, but I say you are a fool!" On thinking a moment the great statistician learned that real prosperity consisted not so much in fame, power or money as it did in happiness, love, peace and health. If you have good health you are both fortunate and prosperous.

Yet, I know something better than health. It is life! Life is our most valuable earthly possession. The only thing for which we will risk our own lives is a life. When a human life is at stake, be it foe, stranger or kin, the meanest of us are willing to gamble our lives to save it. Some one falls in the river. We will plunge in hazarding our lives to save that one. A house is on fire. A baby is in the cradle. We will rush through the smoke and flames to rescue it. Life is the one big thing of earth and without it we can do nothing. Even the afflicted and sickly cling to life. None are so old but what they want to live. I was talking to a man of about four score years and he said he hoped he would still live a few

more years. The old and the young, the rich and the poor, the well and the sick strive to live. The old will call in the doctor as quickly as the young when it is necessary. The first of all human rights is the right to live. Physicians keep busy trying to push back the horizon of death. Scientists have made a speciality of increasing the days of a man's life; and now boast of the fact that the average life today is a few years longer than it was yesterday. Some of you read about Helen Hamilton, the little twelve year old afflicted, bed-ridden girl, over in New Jersey, who a few years ago with her mother, was evicted from their one room home because the widowed mother could not pay the rent. This stirred the heart of the world and presents of every description and from every where came to her, but with them all her one desire was to live to be thirteen years old. A Philadelphia heart specialist got busy and tried to prolong her life and was successful. Yes, we want to live. Life is sweeter than good health itself.

This brings me to the point to say that I know something even better than this life itself. You will ask, "What! Something greater and better than life? Pray tell me what it is!" I gladly answer.

The life beyond the grave. The Eternal Life. How grand! How sublime! What makes it excel all other things is its availability and permanency. We all cannot be rich in monies. It is a good thing we are not. Frank Crane says, "If every man were a

millionaire the world would speedily go to the devil" and I believe he is about correct. If we were rich, our riches would not abide unless we transported them ahead of us. Upon the tomb of Atolus of Rheims it was written: "He exported his fortune before him into heaven by his charities. He has gone thither to enjoy them." Happy is he, who has a right to such an epitaph. Money used otherwise or not used at all is bound to fail when death comes. Some one asked at the death of a rich man what he left and was told he left everything. Money in itself has no permanent value. You cannot purchase with your dollar today what you could ten years ago. An American walked into a Berlin restaurant and ordered a dollar dinner. He was given soup and meats and a fine meal. After he finished, he sat back and lighted a cigar to have a smoke before he paid for the meal. In the meantime the waiter brought him another plate of soup, and pretty soon some more meats. The guest was astonished and inquired what it meant. "The dollar has gone up again," said the waiter. Money goes up and comes down. Youth is a rare possession but time will rob one of it and class him with the old and wornout folk. Health is fine. But some of these days the doctor is going to drive up to the door of the stoutest of us and order us to the hospital. Life is great, the best of earth, but one of these days the black wagon will come to your door and you will have your last ride. Man is born to die. Let

the shepherd king fall before his God in prayer again and listen, "We are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding."

"For we are the same our fathers have been;
We see the same sights our fathers have seen;
We drink the same stream and view the same sun,
And run the same course our fathers have run.

The thoughts we are thinking our fathers would think;
From the death we are shrinking our father would shrink;
To the life we are clinging they also would cling:
But it speeds for us all like a bird on the wing.

'Tis the wink of an eye, 'tis the draught of a breath,
From the blossom of health to the paleness of death;
From the gilded saloon to the bier and the shroud—
O why should the spirit of mortal be proud?"

All that live must die. The insect of the summer morning dies at the end of day. The bird that came every spring to build her nest near your door finally fails to return. The turtle and the elephant may live for centuries but just the same at some remote day their bones will bleach on the sands of time. I am looking at that tremendous mountain and am questioning the everlastingness of those hills. I know that these strong and virile trees, if they escape the woodman's axe, will in the end rot and fall to the ground; and I am wondering if some day these very hills will not crumble and be gone. Yes, man and everything come to be no

more. No! Not everything! God abides. Heaven is everlasting. The soul of man is immortal. At the end of the tired day you cast aside your fleshly garment but the soul goes marching on. The soul of man is destined to survive the ages. And, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" The soul ought to be our greatest concern. Yet, the average man doesn't seem to worry about it. We are more alarmed about our bodies. We are giving more time to the keeping alive the body than we are the soul. A social worker in the slums and cesspools of a city said he wasn't troubled so much about the lack of conveniences and comforts of the inhabitants of those districts as he was about their lack of a desire for better things. It is a sad thing to find people who are satisfied to live in filth, breathe impure air and eat dirty food. It is a sad thing to find people who are satisfied when they care for the body and neglect the soul. The major problem of the world is the salvation of the individual soul. To fail here means a complete failure. No one has ever lived who was better informed on the worth while things of life than Christ and He taught us that the soul was worth more than the whole world. Were a fish to gain the waters of the ocean and lose its gills, it would profit it nothing. Were a bird to gain all the atmosphere from earth to heaven and lose its wings, it would profit it nothing. Were a man to gain all the emoluments of the world and stack

them at his feet and lose his own soul they would profit him nothing. Why will a man give more business acumen and attention to his business than his soul? Why will a man give more time to the keeping of his ledger correct than he will to the keeping his soul pure? The ancient astronomers gave us a theory that the earth was the center of all things and all other planets traveled about it. Their complex systems of epicycles grew more and more complex and meaningless with the advance of learning. Soon everyone was confused. But along came Copernicus who discovered that the earth wasn't the center of things but the sun was, and the geocentric theory of the universe was relegated to the scrapheap and we saw the world move forward intelligently and the planets marched in order. The trouble with men is we often become earth-centered, self-centered and fail to find that the soul is the center of things. It is of supreme worth and eternal value. Two men were driving through the countryside of their childhood. One man had been away from home a long time. As they passed a beautiful mansion he asked his friend about it saying, "That is a new house. I wonder what it cost?" The other man answered, "His soul!" That was a poor transaction. A certain king, it is said, was on sea with his courtiers when a storm arose, and, as he had with him many treasures, it became necessary to lighten the ship. While he held on to his wealth he commanded some of his attendants be thrown over-

board to perish. You say that was a mean king, and mean he was. Yet, today men will hang on to their earthly acquirings and throw overboard their immortal souls.

Let me briefly name several ways by which we can learn to value the worth of a soul.

In the first place I will say by working to save it. The man who has earned a dollar by hard labor knows more about the value of that piece of money than he who inherits a fortune. When I find a man busy talking to his friend about his soul's welfare, be it in the home, on the street or along the highway, I know at once there is a man who has a secret. He knows something about the value of a soul, and thus he works to save it. It isn't said that the wise man makes a lot of money, but "He that winneth souls is wise."

We can gain some conception of the value of a soul, by the way good men of the past valued theirs. Martyrs willingly gave their lives, that most wonderful gift, in order that their souls might live. Polycarp, one time young disciple of John the Apostle, later bishop of Smyrna in Asia Minor, was brought before the Roman Governor who promised to free him if he would turn and revile Christ. If not, he would go to the den of wild beasts. Polycarp answered that he had been serving God for eighty-six years and God had never done him wrong, and consequently he was not in position then to blaspheme His name. This saint walked boldy to the

stake and suffered himself to be burned alive rather than give up his faith. Saints of all ages valued their souls more than they did their lives. When John Hooper was sentenced to die for his faith on Feb. 9th, 1555, his friends pleaded with him to give up the faith and spare his life. He answered them, "Life is sweet and death is bitter. Eternal life is more sweet; eternal death is more bitter." And he died for his faith.

We learn to value a soul when we see it in its beauty and perfection. I know the value of a flower not by seeing its withered form but by beholding it in its beauty and fragrance. When I find a soul that has unfolded in love resembling the love of its Creator then I find something which transcends all earthly beauties.

In the last place we may learn to value a soul by the value Jesus put on it. To Jesus the soul was of Divine origin and infinite value. It was the chief object in the Divine economy of salvation. He came to seek and to save the lost soul. He asks teachers, preachers, scientists, statesman and all mankind to take care of the soul. He gave His life's blood for the soul. He sacrificed all that the soul might live. He didn't come to earth to make money and enjoy life. He came to save souls from death. A good way to learn the worth of anything is to first find out its original cost. The price of a soul is the blood of Jesus Christ. While everything else may

fluctuate in price, the soul's price is the same, eternally the same.

Were Jesus to walk the streets of any of our great industrial cities and there meet a little ragged urchin, I hazard to say He would again stoop and take that little one up into his great arms of love, not unlike He did on the Jordan coasts of Judaea, and put His hands on her head and bless her. He would spend more time in her company than He would in going through the great stores, shops and factories of that city. Jesus didn't come to earth that great stores and shops and factories and banking houses and railroad centers might rise, but He came that the soul of that little one might have eternal life. That little soul is worth more than all the multiplied wealth of that city. If only we preachers could realize the worth of a soul, as Jesus did, we would have more earnest preaching and far greater. If the laity could know the worth of a soul as Jesus did, we would have more church going and better listening. Knowledge of the value of a soul will increase our pulpit power, our listening ability, our praying habit and our personal efforts to bring men to God. This is the duty of the church and the Christian. Your duty and mine. What shall it profit that city were she to become the Metropolis of the earth and through neglect the soul of that little girl was lost? What shall it profit any man if he shall gain the whole cosmos and forfeit eternal life? If all the diamonds, jewels, monies and

emoluments of the earth were placed on one beam of a scale to weigh against the soul of one little child, the soul of that little one would outweigh them all. That which lives within is worth infinitely more than all the external creation. So, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" If the world were yours you could not exchange it for the soul.

THE WHAT AND WAY OF WORSHIP

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"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." *St. John 4. 24.*

The central idea emerging from any religion is the idea of its God. This idea influences its adherents and fashions their mode of worship. A true knowledge of God is the greatest aid to true worship of God. No one can really worship God until he knows God. To know Him means to know more than something about Him. Knowing something about a person and knowing that one are two different things. In these days of the telephone, the newspaper and other modernities for broadcasting gossip and scandal it is not difficult for us to learn many things about people even though it is exceedingly hard to know them. You can know something about a person whom you have never seen, but to know that one you must be intimate with him, knowing even the desires of his heart, his inclinations and disinclinations; yea these and more. There is a great difference between knowing something about the Bible and knowing the Bible. I can know something about this Book without ever opening its lids to peruse its sacred pages. I can read some treatise on the Bible and tell you many things about it. To know the Bible I must get the eternal verities from it into my daily experiences. No man can

know the Bible until he has lived it. There is a broad chasm between knowing something about Christ than knowing Him. The pages of profane history tells of a great teacher among the Jews. The lives of our neighbors make us know some things, at least, about Him. But to know Him is a personal finding. A knowledge coming from within and not from without. When we have made the discovery of His regenerating and savings powers at work within our soul, experiencing the forgiveness of sin and acceptance into the family of God, the spirit of bondage to fear having been supplanted by the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father, then we begin to know our Saviour.

The indifference and lukewarmness found in some of our churches today are directly traceable to the fact we are having so few real experiences in these times. Where are the old fashioned experience and testimony meetings? In most places they are dead and buried. Why? Easy enough. It would be grotesque for one to attempt to testify when he has nothing about which to testify. Imagine a man giving in his experience, when he has had no experience to give in. I am not saying your experience must tally with mine; and mine must be identical with the man across the way, but I am saying in the realm of the Spiritual there are experiences as certainly as in the sphere of the physical. I go up to the dentist to have a tooth extracted, and before I get out of that office, I wager you, I will have an

experience; and sometimes an experience that will not be difficult to remember. Were I a victim of appendicitis they would rush me to a hospital and there a skilled surgeon would get busy and remove my appendix. Yes, they would give me an anaesthetic to put me asleep while the operation was being performed but the task of removing my appendix was not without an experience to me. In plain view of these facts pertaining to the physical, why should we expect the Great Physician of the Soul to perform that Divine piece of surgery upon the sin-polluted heart, removing every spot and stain, draining therefrom all extraneities without some kind of an experience to the patient? It is not enough to stop there, but this experience must be followed by others. The Christian is a sad soul, indeed, who has had but one experience. He generally makes all about him sad as he continues to harp upon it. We are expecting the convalescent to have a new experience each day as he comes to good health and then his experiences are to continue as the days come and go. Truly the man walking with body erect and shoulders back is having an experience with life, daily differing from that which he had when he was nearly drawn double with pain and agony. He is enjoying strength, health and life, the finest among all experiences. Likewise the Christian, no longer burdened and bent under sin, day by day has a new experience in his fellow-ship and walk with God and man. God save us from the day when Methodism

no longer feels the warming of the heart. Let a preacher come and preach with authority, knowing whom he has believed, experiencing God's ability to keep all things, by having committee unto Him all things to keep, that preacher will astonish the world. Likewise will the layman who can testify with authority. "And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes." Now then, Jesus didn't keep this authority only within Himself. Before He sent His disciples out to preach trial sermons He endowed them with power and authority. "Then He called His twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick." At another place we are told about the return of the seventy. "And the seventy returned again with joy, saying Lord, even the devils are subjected unto us through thy name." Here and there the question is asked, "Why are we not doing these wonderful things today?" I am happy to say, some are! There is a man sitting in this congregation who with his own lips told me the past 4th of July that it was the first Fourth he had spent in twenty years without being intoxicated. He has not touched a drop of intoxicants since he was converted last winter. With him are many others whom you know. They were drunkards on our streets and today since our great revival here, they walk our streets perfectly sober and

live upright lives. How do you account for it? They have found power and authority over drink. Devils have been cast out in His name. Men have come to know Christ whom to know aright is life eternal. Enough of miracles have taken place here before our own eyes and in our own lives to make us love God forever.

The Beloved Apostle, seasoned by many years of experience took time before his passing to pen us his epistles. Hear the opening words of that first great letter. "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." There is nothing else to write about and we have nothing else to preach. Might we know God and His Word through experience? It is well to know books; it is well to know persons; but to know God is an imperative. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

Let us now ask, WHAT IS GOD?

God is Spirit. This is Christ's explanation of God to the woman of Samaria according to our text. This version gives it, God is a Spirit. Not so in the original. The Greek reads πνεῦμα ὁ θεὸς literally translated, Spirit is God. The Greek carries no indefinite article. Both Moffatt and Goodspeed observe this in their translations. So we have it, God is Spirit. Spirit is something not seen though ex-

perienced. Man is a spirit. He cannot be seen. We see only the physical body which tabernacles his spirit for a short while, and is its instrument of service and expression. That index finger responds to an unseen and unheard inward call. Now watch it bend. What caused it to bend? Something within this body of mine that you cannot see gave orders and the finger complied. That which dwells within has feeling, thought, power of action, etc. capable of ruling over the physical, and should the latter gain precedence over the former then man is in a sad plight. Thus as the body is subjected to the ego, so ought the ego or man himself be subjected to the Spirit itself, Who is God? God is Spirit, and spirit is invisible, immortal, omnipresent.

"Whither shall I go," said the Psalmist, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence; If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea:

Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."

God is Light. Light is the destroyer of darkness. Take a lighted tallow dip into a dungeon and all the darkness therein cannot engulf it, but the candle will expel the darkness as far as it can diffuse its warmth and light. From the remotest corner of the dungeon you will be able to see the light in its work keeping

back the night. God is Light. Christ was the Light of the world. He was the Word in the flesh, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. The word has become a lamp unto our feet, a light unto our path. "This is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

But if we walk in the light, as he in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

As the candle drives out the darkness from before itself, likewise does the presence of God in any heart or place wherein He is allowed to make His abode. In the Dawn of Creation the Spirit moved upon the chaotic conditions of water and dirt, and out of them brought form and order. When the light of God breaks across the threshold of a heart filled with the blackest doubts and misgivings, it quickly disburdens the heart of these things and fills that soul with peace, and joy and love. Yes, God is Light.

God is Life. And he gives life to all. Paul standing in the midst of the company on Mar's hill said, "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all Things ye are too superstitious.

For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, To the Unknown

God. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands.

Neither is worshiped with men's hands, as though he needeth anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things."

It is God who giveth life and breath and all good gifts. On the day when Adam was formed from the dust of the ground he was as inanimate as any heap of clay could be until God breathed into him the breath of life, then he became a living soul, who lived and moved and had his being in God. It is the same with us. The cessation of God would extinct all life. We can exist only in Him. All need is ours; all help is His. Now there is another kind of life besides the physical that God is anxious to impart to men. It is the Spiritual. The former He gives without our consent; the latter He can grant only if we ask for it. But this is the mission of Jesus to us. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Christ was not primarily the Teacher of the Jews or the Mountain Top Preacher; He was the Life Giver. "For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger: and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. The words that I speak unto

you, they are spirit, and they are life." God is Life!

God is Love. "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."

Only God could give to the world such a wonderful definition of Himself, and He could give it through none other, than the most lovable of all disciples, John. Love! What is love? Love is the antithesis of hate. That is true, but it doesn't satisfy. I fear we have attached the word love to this and that weak sentimentalism until we have weakened the very meaning of that heaven born word. What is love? The best definition I could find of that word, I found in the recent American Press Edition Dictionary. It is: "Love is a strong complex emotion or feeling causing one to appreciate, delight in, and crave the presence or possession of the object, and to please and promote the welfare of the object." That is exactly what God does. He delights in us and craves possession of us for our good.

Again love is real. That which is real abides. Money doesn't. Love does. The prodigal can gather his money and the father's love and leave home. He can squander all the money in a short while, but though he may trample the father's love to the ground, he can neither crush it nor squander it. At the end of his wanderings he will find the

father's love reaching out to him, calling him home. The moths and rust of prodigality cannot corrode parental love. Love is indestructible, perennial, eternal. "But whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away; but, LOVE NEVER FAILETH.

And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Someone approached me with the question, "Isn't it strange that God permits wicked, blasphemous blatherskites to live, who go forth vilifying His name?" No, that is not so strange. It happened in the days of the Son of God. His enemies pressed the crown of thorns upon His brow, marched Him down the Via Dolorosa, and on Calvary incarnadined the cross with His blessed blood, but to the astonishment of the anxious, helpless friends of His in the throng, Jesus refused to strike His persecutors dead; he prayed for the foregiveness of their sins. "He is a Wonderful Saviour of Love." We are not living in the Day of Judgment. We are living in the Day of Grace. In the year of our Lord, 1926 A. D. May we hear Jesus again in His inaugural sermon, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and the recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. To preach the acceptable year of the

Lord." This is the acceptable time. The time for men to come to God.

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

"And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

A man might have vilified the name of God, denied the Christ and cursed His followers, yet God will pardon and receive such a one to Himself, adopting him into the family with the sons of God, because this is the Day of Salvation and God is the Father of love. There isn't an unsaved person in this congregation but whom God will receive unto Himself and abundantly pardon all his transgressions. Judgment will follow unless we come. But now Eternal Love invites us to no longer delay.

Now, what have I said? I have said, that God is Spirit and Spirit is everywhere. God is Light and light discomfits darkness. God is Life and gives life and breath to all living things. And God is Love and love continues the Day of Grace, anxiously waiting to accept the wanderer home.

This, then, is our God. Now what is He for? Surely, not to listen to the whims and caprices of vacillating men? God is to be worshiped. The Jews and Samaritans believed this and had their places of worship. The Jews in Jerusalem, as the woman said to Christ, and the Samaritans on the

mountain. The Athenians had their altar inscribed to the unknown God. As far back as we can go we find men worshiping God. The ancient heathens erected their idols and false gods, not to be served by them, but to do them obeisance. Men were fools enough in those primeval days to worship false and unknown gods, but not brutes enough to live without worshiping some god. While, we see on one hand, God is to be worshiped, we see on the other, man is naturally a worshipful creature. And in his devotions will he find peace of heart and by them advance toward his ideal.

In conclusion indulge me to consider with you the mode of worship becoming our God. We can find no better way of worship than the way Jesus told this Samaritan woman." They that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Here the Master breaks the boundary lines of physical place and position and lifts worship into the realm of the Spiritual, for God is Spirit. "Jesus said unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him."

This does not say that the Samaritans must not come to the mountain to worship; nor the Jews must not go to Jerusalem; nor the Christians of today must not enter into their churches, for we are told

in Hebrews not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, but it does surely mean that we ought not confine our worship to these places. At all times and in all places we ought to be in a worshipful mood. Such the Father seeks to worship Him. Furthermore, the mode of worship is not confined to physical posture. One day two men went into the temple to pray. The Pharisee stood with his face uplifted and prayed. The other man, who stood afar off, didn't even lift his eyes toward heaven while he prayed. Yet this man went out of the house of God justified, while the first man went out empty. How do I account for it? This way. I will grant, to look at the two men the physical attitude of the Pharisee appeared to be more in common with one in his devotions than that of the publican, but "The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." Worship is the right attitude of the heart, and not a certain posture of the body. A man can come into this service stand when we stand; bow when we bow; be attentive while I preach and go out of this house without having worshiped God. Some men worship God more on the outside of a church building than some church members ever do on the inside. Often we go to church through sheer force of habit, or if we like the preacher, while it ought to be, to render through love our obeisance and devotions to God. Real worship is sincere faith in; and praise, and adoration, and love for God

under all circumstances and in all places. Let us not confine our worship in temples made with hands. He would poorly worship God who would steal to the mountain and the temple for prayer and then slip down in the valley and up in the street to extort and burden his fellowman. We are not only commanded to love God, but our brothers also, and until we do we cannot worship the Father aright. A man's heart cannot be wrong toward his neighbor and right toward his God any more than a fountain can give forth venomous water to beast and pure water to man at the same time. Worship is the right attitude of the heart.

"God is Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Scofield points out Spirit in this verse to mean The Holy Spirit. The word truth here is translated from the Greek ἀληθεια which Moffatt translates into the word reality, and has his translation read "God is Spirit, and his worshipers must worship him in Spirit and in reality." Thus real worship becomes Spirit led worship. It is not difficult to discern on entering a house of praise whether the worship is Spirit led or man made. Let me paraphrase the text, God is Spirit; and the Spirit must lead the worshipers, if they worship Him in Spirit and in reality. The Holy Spirit is the Divine afflatus that brings us into fellowship with God. And without the leading of the Spirit our worship would become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

THE MIGHTY DYNAMIC

THE MIGHTY DYNAMIC

"In the Beginning God." *Gen. 1. 1.*

In the beginning, on the Fair Morning of Creation, God willed and the heavens and the earth were. His Spirit moved upon the face of the waters and out of chaos came system and order. Mountains were lifted to their supernal positions; valleys were stretched betwixt the summits of the hills; and waters went forth reflecting the glory of their Creator. The sun was given to light and rule the day: the moon to govern the night. Stars were scattered throughout the above unblazoned vastitude and with the sheen of their myriad lamps, assumed the office of illuminating the dome of the Creator's sublime temple of the newly made universe. Out of nowhere fishes came to home in the sea; beasts to roam through field and forest; and birds to nest among the boughs. On the sixth day the Holy Triumvirate met in conclave and God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness!" and it was so. In the beginning, the Divine will, was the Mighty Dynamic, by which all things were made. "And without him was not anything made that was made." "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting" God is God.

Observe, God not only in the beginning but in today. God didn't relinquish His prerogative on the Evening of Creation. He, yet, moves forward the works of nature and presides over the destinies of men, and shall continue to do so. From everlasting to everlasting God is God. The late Bishop Quayle tells us in his book, "With Earth and Sky," that the wonder about wonder is its everywhereness. God is God because of His everlastingness and everywhereness. Would we worship a god who is liable to die at any moment? Or one whose Spirit is limited to time and space? No! But the Creator is larger than the creation. "Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens, cannot contain him." God is everywhere. Not as a great physical being reaching His long thin arms around the extremities of the universe, but wherever harmony and order are found there His will is expressed. In "What and Where is God" Richard Swain gives this illustration. A relative visiting in his home interviewed him concerning his conception of the immanence of God, i.e. God in nature. On tucking her child to bed that night she informed the youngster that God wasn't away off in heaven somewhere but was very near and in everything that was good. Immediately recalling the delicious dinner and being poor on discrimination the boy asked, "Was God in that strawberry shortcake?" The mother was nonplussed. She made no answer. The boy remained in ignorance. Certainly God was not in that strawberry cake. However, several

weeks before the vines, from whence came those berries, were affluent in bloom which changed to little green fruits and ripened into delicious berries in response to the Divine will. They were the expression of God's will not unlike the expression of His will found in creation. Will is the prius of all existence, and its mighty dynamic. Under His Divine egis all things take on beauty and comeliness.

Come with me into the wonderland of nature where every pleasing prospect is the whispering of God. Nature was man's first Bible. His first Book of Revelation. Hundreds of years passed before the Book of the Law, the Book of the Prophets and the Gospels were given to men. In the dawn of civilization man's cathedral was the earth, arched overhead with the sky and lighted by the heavenly luminaries. Man ascended the mountain and on its summit stood and read the Apocalypse of Nature, while from the choir loft nature's grandiloquent voices chimed in assonance with heaven, and heaven and nature sang. God has always had a cathedral, a Book of Revelation, a preacher and witnesses. Someone has well said, "The effectiveness of preaching depends somewhat upon the capacity of the hearer." Oh, for a heart to understand nature's language! Criticising one of Turner's pictured skies, the observer said, "I have never seen such colors in nature." Turner replied, "Perhaps not! But don't you wish you could?"

"Cortez one night trod
The deck alone:
In the high heaven
A great moon shone.
The golden fruit
Of that vast tree,
Whose blue, still branches
Drank the sea.

With questing gaze,
That captain dreamed,
While the gold pathway
Shook and gleamed,
But to his gaze,
Hungry and intense,
Burned not that broad
Magnificence!"

The bud reaching towards blossoming is gradually unfolded into full bloom by the power of God. The rose lifting its blushing cheek towards the sun catches its crimson hue from the hand of the artist Divine. Above yonder's moss-covered mountain side nature waves her wonder working wand, and lo, up through the green carpet comes, unafraid, the pale-face trailing arbutus, soft as a baby's cheek, first announcer of the arrival of spring. The uninvited Easter lily slips up quietly through the meadow sod, and stands arrayed in royal robes not rivaled by Solomon in all his glory. In a day or two every hill and valley don their flowery dresses, flooding the landscape with kaleidoscopic beauties and fragrancing the air with perfumes. A flower! Can you

explain it? You can see its beauty. You can catch its fragrance. You can draw it to your heart. But explain it. Never! Wrapped in that little wonder are the unfathomable mysteries of God. All that we can ever know is that the Divine power has been at work and the Divine will is expressed. Love the flower! As a witness to the will of Him, though not its Father, the flower can outpreach, outsing and outchime us all. Russia tried to kill the religious faith in her peasantry but utterly failed, because the hills and valleys sent their nature song continuously into the hearts of those toilers of the soil. It is futile to attempt to kill the faith in the soul of a man who is charmed by the blade that comes from the soil and unfolds into a flower. Nature is sacred. Jean Henri Fabre retired to the Chapel of Lilacs to pray. Jesus went into the fields and up on the mountains to talk with God. The greatest sermon the weary world has ever heard was preached from the mountain side by the Christ. The flaming bush meant the turning point in Moses' life and the deliverance of the children of Israel from the Egyptian bondage. A little flower, a tall tree, a burning bush have said things to men whom no preacher could reach.

> "Poems are made by fools like me,
> But only God can make a tree."

Will you turn to the waters? Be it the cool water brook inviting thirsty man and beast to come and

drink; the alacrious mountain stream searching for a wider channel; the winding river bearing the freshets of its tributaries to the sea; the unexcitable lake, untroubled as a quiet heart, calm as the sunset in whose splendor it is basking; the thundering cataract tumbling over rock and precipice; or the inimitable ocean, whose unsounded depths lie unapproachable before us, they all show forth the glory of God and act in conformity to His will. Some years agone at evening-time another minister and I journeyed from St. Paul to see "The Laughing Waters" Minnehaha Falls immortalized by Longfellow's "Hiawatha." As there we watched and wondered, the sun, westering, tossed over its goodnight kisses of color and gold, which the reflecting waters gathered and passed on to us. Our friend said, "God is here at work." The will of Him, who measures the waters in the hollow of His hand, was here expressed.

Do mountains and hills charm you? The first time we saw the Rockies, I remember how they attracted us. In all their majesty they appeared to lie across the end of the earth lifting their snow-crowned heads up against heaven's gate. They acquainted us with the will of Him, who has weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance.

"I love thy rocks and rills,
Thy woods and templed hills,
My heart with rapture thrills
Like that above."

Have you ever gone to sleep in the great out-of-doors, having over you no blanket but the air, the stars and the sky? If you haven't, try it sometime. Wait until all of nature is abed before you go to sleep. Watch the tired bird tuck his head aneath his wing. Notice the flower bow its head and begin the dreamless night. See the mountains repose in peace. Then look up and see the constellatory maidens come out to watch over a slumbering world. O, the stars! They stream the heavens with beauty and the heart with gladness. Then over the eastern hill slips up the moon and studs the earth with multiplied beams of light and silver. And you will thank God for God. It is said, unbelieving German soldiers invaded and ransacked the Christian home of a French woman. They destroyed her Bible; burned the picture of the last supper and set the church, which stood across the street, on fire. Then they informed the Christian that she would soon forget God as there was nothing left to remind her of Him. They thought they had obliterated all chirography that bespoke of God. But the woman turned to them and said, "You haven't dipped the waters from their channels, nor plucked the stars from the skies. And as long as water runs and stars shine, so long will the heavens declare his glory, and the earth showeth forth his handiwork." Yet, how many of us go through life without ever looking up towards the heavens unless it is to see if we are going to have rain or shine. We buy an automobile that can

travel sixty miles an hour and think it is wonderful, but how few of us consider the wonderfulness of this world turning in space at the rate of more than one thousand miles an hour! The stellar universe is a magnificent story written by the Divine hand across the endless face of space and it should fascinate us. More time spent with stars and sunsets would help us to love God more.

In turning the leaves of the Apocalypse of Nature we come to the flower page and call it beautiful; the water page and say it is wonderful; the mountain page and acknowledge it to be majestic; the starry page and call it sublime. On further study we find each page to be beautiful, wonderful, majestic and sublime. Which is the most beautiful? or the most wonderful? or the most majestic? or the most sublime? We cannot say. We do not know. God alone knows. And God doesn't tell.

This world of ours is only one of God's countless worlds. What a God our God is. While His will is being declared to us, it is also being made known throughout a universe of worlds. "How powerful and wise must he be," says Fenelon, "Who makes worlds as innumerable as the grains of the sand that cover the seashore, and who leads all these wandering worlds without difficulty during so many ages, as a shepherd leads his flock." The wonders of the skies, the countless beauties of organic nature, and all the inexplicable mysteries of life disclose God's power and will. While all the natural world presents

to us an all-powerful God, a Supreme will as its Creator, a Cosmic Potentate as its Ruler, it leaves us in ignorance to the Divine love. We need to look elsewhere in the work of creation to discover this. And we find it in man.

The results of the crowning efforts of the Creator is man. God made him to be just a little lower than the angels, and crowned him with glory and honour. In managing the affairs of the earth man is a worker together with God. Man is the one work of God upon whom the Creator could pour our His Fatherly love. When he disobeyed the Father, the only begotten Son was sent into the world to woo the wanderer back into the folds of the everlasting kingdom. A righteous man is the true revealer of God's will combined with love. A flower, a mountain and river cannot declare the love of God. Man has been so fashioned as to resemble his Creator, and the love of God is shed abroad in man's heart.

"O for a closer walk with man,
A bright and cheery face,
A heart to feel, a brain to plan
The weal of this lost race."

So while we walk the corridors of nature to catch a glimpse of God, let us not forget that He, too, is found in man.

"If God were not found in earth or sky,
Or where the world's greatest wonders are,
I'd find his secret dwelling place,
By lines upon a saintly face."

But the greatest manifestation, the greatest revelation of God the world has ever seen, came via of the manger of Bethlehem. As a great lake reflects the glory of the heavens, so Christ is the mirror of the heart of God. The Father was in Him, and He was in the Father, and the words that He spake and the works that He did were not of Himself, but of the One who abided in Him. He that saw the Son, saw the Father, also. He then who knows the Son, knows the Father. We can claim no knowledge of God, unless we first are acquainted with the Son. By the incarnation the unseeable God took form, and passed by the angels in heaven and came to earth, and we beheld His glory.

"Here is the truth in a little creed,
Enough for all the roads we go:
In love is all the law we need,
In Christ is all the God we know."

There is no way of approach to God, other than the Christ way, over which the Holy Spirit guides us into all truth. The Holy Spirit is the Mighty Dynamic which carries us to God. And we need God in our lives. If the flower needs God to come to its perfection of beauty; if the mountain needs God to find its imposing position; if the waters need God to sweep them through their channels; if the stars need God to send them in their courses, we also need God to lead us onward to the haven of peace and abiding complacency.

The human heart is a longing heart. The physical appetites of the natural man are as hungry wolves seeking to be fed and the heart goes forth hoping to find the gratification of each one. The most prominent element in the consciousness is the feeling of pleasure and pain. An unsatisfied appetite is in itself painful, whereas satisfying that appetite brings with it the feeling of pleasure. Men have always longed for pleasure and not pain. Pleasure means happiness. So strong was the heart in its call for happiness, that hedonistic philosophers arose who asserted happiness to be the one thing desirable and the chief end of life, and theorized on how to obtain it. We haven't lost this desire. We, still, live in a pleasure seeking age, but I question if we live in a pleasure finding age. Doris Blake, writing in the Chicago Tribune, of a year or two ago, informed us, we were spending billions, annually, for amusements and then turned around and asked, "But Have We Got Fun?" She reported: 20,000,000 daily admissions to motion picture houses; 40,000,000 yearly admissions to county fairs; 12,000,000 circus goers; 10,000,000 fishermen; 10,000,000 card players; 20,000,000 radio fans; 12,000,000 automobilists. About 19,000,000 participate in Y. M. C. A. diversions and about 6,000,000 dance every day. Six billion dollars were spent in America last year for pleasure alone. Half as much as all the war debts, including unpaid interest, that foreign countries owe us. The question is, "Have We Got Fun?" Are we

really happy? Are we completely satisfied? Lasting satiety from these sources is about as certain as a conversation is with Mars. It appears to be impossible. On Boulevard Des Italiens, Paris, I stood to watch the matching heights of fashion. Men attired in newest suits and women clothed in gorgeous apparel came riding in limouisines attended by servant and doorman. Detectives were there waiting to guard their costly jewelry. They entered the Grand Opera and saw the finest plays in the world. After the performance, they frequented the gilded champagne parlors and lifted the sparkling glass to one another's health. On returning home other servants and maids were in attendance. But were they really happy? Really satisfied? No! They, too, were longing for the joy which the world cannot give. One may sip the nectar of worldly pleasure, set the fashion for society and fare as sumptiously as a nabob every day and yet be as miserable and unsatisfied as Marcus Aurelius. The one who imagines the worth while satisfaction to come from the feeding of the individual natural appetites deceives himself. Pleasure comes not so much from satisfying each desire but the satisfying of oneself. Oneself means more than physical self. There is a Spiritual self. This higher self reaches out to the Infinite for joy and the finite things of the material world cannot appease that eternal call.

Papini in his work, "The Life of Christ" tells of men futilely searching for happiness. He says, "We

have tried the experiment of fierceness, and blood answered blood. We have tried the experiment of lust; and lust has left in the mouth the odor of corruption and a fierce fever. We have tried the experiment of intellectualism, and at the end things have remained the same, eternally the same. We have tried the experiment of art and our feebleness have brought the strongest to despire. We have tried the experiment of wealth, and have found ourselves poorer. In no thing has our soul found quiet." In another place, he gives us a picture of the king, celebrating his son's wedding, who was disappointed when the first invited guests refused to come because of other material pleasures. The servants were sent to gather in the blind, the poor, the mained, the halt, the lowest of the rabble from the streets. They were seated at the banquet table and yet there was room. He adds, "The invitation to the banquet of the Kingdom is a promise of spiritual happiness, absolute, satisfying, perpetual." That being true, it is high time we quit experimenting and lay hold on that which means real, abiding, lasting happiness and joy.

Jesus finding the woman at the well of Sychar informed her of its inability to satisfy her thirst. "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again," He said. So very true of every earthly fountain. Drink at the fountain of wealth and the more you drink the more you thirst. Fill yourself from the fountain of fame and in an hour you ask

for another glass. Drink from the fountain of earthly pleasures and your thirst is never quenched. Drink deeply from the fountain of science and philosophy and you will not be satisfied long. Now, this Samaritan woman would have remained in a quandary had the Master passed on without pointing out to her a fountain better than Jacob's well. Christ continued, "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. "Nothing short of that can give us the greatest happiness.

McKensie in his "Manual of Ethics" says, "Everyone would like to be happy; and consequently if there were any practical science of happiness, everyone would be bound to follow its laws." Well, there it is. It is not a science. It is a faith. It comes highly recommended by all who have tried it. It has never failed. Accept the Christ. Let the Holy Spirit, that Mighty Dynamic, have full control of your life and you will find a peace that passeth all understanding. The invitation is to all. Whosoever will may come and drink. And, "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

Again. We need the power of God in us if we are going to live a life worth while. The Greek for man is anthropos. Anthropos literally means an uplooker. No man can live as he ought to live, unless he is an uplooker. He must look up to God for

help. About twenty years ago, W. S. Harriss came out with his book entitled, "Sermons by the Devil" wherein he had a chapter on "The Sermons on The River of Life." There were many boats on this river. Many were drifting down the stream. A few were going the other way. It required no effort to go down with the tide but to stem the current the oars had to be used. Many attractions were along the banks to catch one's attention and cause him to forget the oars. Then the boat would turn and start in the other direction. The oars had the pulling power in them only as long as they were used. The Holy Spirit has the pulling power to carry us up the hills of life if we will but call on Him. The Holy Spirit is the Mighty Dynamic which can change our disquietude into satisfaction; our night into day, and fill our souls with eternal happiness. The Holy Spirit is the Mighty Dynamic which enables man to conform to the will of God and live a Christian life.

THE CRIMSON TREE

THE CRIMSON TREE

"There they crucified him." *St. Luke 23. 33.*

The day of the Passover is at hand. Jerusalem is astir. Millions are visiting in the city. The hotels, inns, homes and streets are crowded. The temple has its usual feast day overflow. Money changers and profiteers are back of their tables. High priests and church dignitaries are seated in splendor and honor. The Sanhedrin had its way. Spineless Pilate had released Barabbas and turned Jesus over into the hands of His enemies. Down Via Dolorosa, by the temple, moves a long procession. Tired women come from the kitchens; old men, too feeble to join the marching crowd, manage to reach the doors and windows, and lift their glasses to see. Dirty-face and bare-foot children trot along trying to learn what is taking place. Men, who have been healed of all kinds of diseases by the Divine Healer, follow expecting to see Him declare Himself at any moment, strike His enemies dead and go free. Here and there from the passing mob we hear vicious men shout to their friends along the street, "We have Him now! And to the cross we shall nail Him!" The multitude is happy. The air is soft with the touches of spring. The morning sun glistens the dew drops on a million flowers, and the hill-side resembles acres of diamonds. Everywhere we see joy and life.

No! Not everywhere. Near the head of the column there are three sad faces, and worn bodies carrying heavy wooden crosses. A Centurion is ordering them to keep in step. They are followed by twelve hard-face soldiers carrying sharp spears. Two of the cross bearers are cursing and swearing. The third, thorn-crowned, carries His cross without a murmur. He is pale of face, Divine of countenance. Soon these three will be stretched upon their crosses to hang there until they are dead. Life everywhere but none for them. There is nothing for them but suffering and death. He who came to give life to all, was to lose His own. The mob will return to feast day dinners and loving friends. The cross-bearers must remain on the Hill of the Skull.

Weary and worn by the faithlessness of His own, the agonizing in Gethsemane, the sleepless night, the unmerciful scourging, the miserable crown of thorns, the loss of blood the once fair face of Jesus is drawn in anguish and His weakened body crushes to the ground under the weight of the heavy cross. "Is He dead?" One answers, "No!" Another, "He is a weakling." Another, "He is a hypocrite. Prick Him with the spear! That will lift Him." It is done. But He fails to stir. After a while He gains sufficient strength to stagger to His feet. They force Him to shoulder the cross again. Again, He falls. A Cyrenian is called to help Him carry the cross, and the place of the crucifixion is finally reached. Simon

drops his share of the cross. Here is the place where all mortals who follow Christ can drop their load of sin and go free. But Jesus was not free. The Centurion gives orders. Great haste is made. The Son of man is stripped of His clothing, and is commanded to stretch Himself upon the tree. He who in life had no place to lay His head now pillows it upon the hard wood. The hand, that had touched the eyes of the blind and made them see, a soldier grabs and stretches it a full arm's length and spikes it to the extremity of the crossbeams. The first blow of the hammer tears the flesh and the blood spurts. At the second blow the nail penetrates the bone. The third fastens it to the beam. Likewise another soldier is securing the other hand to the opposite extremity of the beam. The other two soldiers are flattening the feet on the upright post and are driving the nails through the insteps. No! Jesus is not screaming. He is not cursing. He closes His eyes and twists His head from side to side, saying "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." Pilate's inscription, which was written in the three languages of the day, Hebrew, Latin and Greek, was rehung about His neck. The soldiers then quickly lift the head of the cross and slide the foot of it into the deep hole. Hear it drop with a deadening thud. The flesh tears under the nails. Rocks and dirt are piled in to hold the cross steady. The soldiers turn for their pay. The garment of the victim is theirs. They quarter His clothing and

take an equal share of all, except the under garment, which was perhaps made by the loving hands of His mother, and for this they gamble. With the mob they turn and mock and revile Him. The enemy's last deed is done. The mob is happy. The church is satisfied. The women mourn. A disciple or two await His last word. The lords of Jerusalem have had their way. But all of heaven is sad. The greatest sacrifice of all time began here at nine o'clock Friday morning the year A.D. 29. Christ was the priest and also the sacrifice. Legions of angels crowd against the banisters of heaven anxious to rush down and release the suffering Son of God. Long ago, they remembered when Abraham was called to offer up Isaac, God rushed an angel to stay his hand, and no doubt they wanted this to occur again. But God didn't dispatch such a company. He allows His Son to suffer, regardless of His wishes. It was heaven's saddest spectacle.

How could heaven look long on such a sight? The windows of that city must have been lowered and the blinds were drawn. From noon until three o'clock heaven surely was closed and darkness covered the earth. Dr. Good in "The Jesus of Our Fathers" says concerning the reason of the darkness, "Perhaps it was a symbol of the hiding of the Father's face from his Son in that great hour of suffering; and as such, it would have a direct connection with the cry of Jesus, 'My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me!'" He goes on to say that

no doubt the probable purpose was because of the shame of the cross which Christ was enduring. For the sinless Christ to have died in any form at the hands of men would have been indeed humiliating, but to die the most shameful way was worse. The cross as an instrument of death was used only in cases marked with special infamy, and intended for none but the vilest of the vile. No Roman was forced to endure the cross. Yet the Prince of Glory was called to die on the tree. It isn't then any wonder that God cut off the vision of the hissing, mocking world from His suffering Son by the veil of darkness. There in night Jesus suffers in silence. Stand by the cross. Listen! Do you hear the drops of blood as they fall from his body and drop into the dark pool beneath? D-r-i-p. D-r-i-p. D-r-i-p.

At three the darkness passes from the landscape. The sun comes forth again. The cross has become, a crimson tree, incarnadined with the blood of the world's Redeemer. His body is thin and nearly lifeless. Breathing is drawn and at long intervals. He summons all His strength and whispers, "It is finished. Father, unto thy hands, I commend my spirit." He is dead!

Having the consent of Pilate, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, two members of the Sanhedrin, who refused to concur in the crucifixion, take down the body from the cross, swathe it in the cerements of the grave, and tenderly entomb it.

The supreme tragedy of the ages has come to an

end. Man's worse work is ended. The body of the Crucified One sleeps in the cold sepulchre.

WHY NEED THIS BE? WHY ALL OF THIS PHYSICAL PAIN, WITH ITS ACCOMPANYING INCREASING MENTAL AGONY? WHAT NECESSITATED THE CROSS? WHO CONDEMNED JESUS?

We would not attempt to philosophize concerning the cross. No human mind can fathom its depths. But nevertheless the cross is a fact. In a way we have given you a little picture of its suffering, but we have not words to display its vividness, and if we had we would not dare to give you so much tragedy and ugliness and suffering to behold. Yet, we must behold the cross. We must from time to time gaze upon it and meditate thereon. It is the central truth of our religion. It is the chief stone of our faith. There may be some religions that are crossless, but the Christian faith is built around the cross. Remove the cross from our religion and it is dead. You may think as you please about some things and it will not injure your soul, but the eternal destiny of your soul depends on the way you view the "Cross of Christ." We must think about it. We must keep it before our eyes.

Who condemned Jesus? Surely not the Father. God didn't cry, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" Men cried for His blood. "Men dragged Him to a mock trial. Men condemned the Holy One of God a sinner. Men speared Him on to Golgotha. Hypo-

critical Judas, self-loving Caiaphas, worldly ambitious Pilate, black hearted humanity, and cruel soldiers betrayed, spite upon, crowned with thorns, mocked, persecuted, condemned, assaulted and crucified Him. Men made the cross and drove the nails."

What caused men to do this awful thing? Sin! Sin! O, the horrors of sin. Everywhere sin builds crosses. The sins of a faithless wife sends a cross to the heart of her good husband. The sins of worthless husbands construct crosses after crosses for devoted wives to carry. The sins of children everywhere load down fathers and mothers with heavy crosses. Sin made men build the cross on Calvary. If you want to find out how black and vile sin is retire to Golgotha and there you will find sin in full array against God. The reason some of us think we are pretty good folk is due to the fact we make the wrong comparison. We say we are as good as so and so. So and so isn't our standard. If we look to Calvary and see how we stand we will drop our heads in shame. No man can look at the Crimson Tree on which Jesus died and not weep over his sins. One glimpse of the sinlessness of Christ reveals the sinfulness of self. What a terrific thing it would be to be rushed into the presence of God and look on His face, if we are unforgiven sinners. The very thought of our own sins would drive us out of His presence. Just as soon as Isaiah in the temple caught a vision of God, he exclaimed, "Woe is me!

for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." On the day of the Pentecost when Peter lifted the "Cross of Christ" before the multitude, the thousands cried, "Men and brethern, what shall we do?" Likewise, Saul of Tarsus when on the Damascus highway saw the Lord, he asked "Lord, what will thou have me to do?" The cross is the chief manifestation of sin. Not just the sins of the persecutors of that day, but the sins of all humanity. Yours and mine are included. He suffered because of us. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities." Had men never sinned there would have been no Calvary. Sin made necessary the cross.

However, the cross shows us something more than sin. It shows us the love of God. Sin necessitated it. Love permitted it. Were not God love, Christ would not have gone to the cross. Although God hated sin, His eternal love went out to sinning men. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son," to win men back to Himself. Sin had separated men from God. Like Adam men were trying to hide from the face of God. The cross is Divine love reaching out to draw men back into the loving heart of a great Father. The cross meant suffering not only for the Son, but the Father also. To see the ones we love suffer, causes us to suffer with them. When the cross was planted on

Calvary, a cross went deep into the heart of God. When the thorns were pressed on the Saviour's brow, God suffered in heaven. The spear, that pierced the tender side of the Son, sent its sting to the Person of the Father. Never was Jesus forced to suffer, no nor man, but what God was hurt to the quick. Jesus declared that He and the Father were one. They were one in love, mind, service and suffering. It is said that St. Francis of Assisi thought so long on the passions of Christ, that at last his hands and his feet bore strange marks like the scars of the nail wounds. If mortal man can so think about his suffering Christ, what must the marks be like that God carries from this cruel experience? A suffering God. Is that a new thought? No other religion has ever given us such an idea. Their gods are pictured as living in pomp and glory, enjoying endless pleasures and attended by numerous servants. Men come and go at their bidding and are awe-stricken by their thunderous tones. No other god has ever given himself for his followers. Rather they would crush their followers and servants to make them worship and praise them. Our God is different. His majesty is the silent dignity of suffering. His power is the power of love. Sin has always bruised the heart of God. Since the day of Adam's sin the searching eyes of the Holy One are full of tears. His heart ached that day. It was broken at Golgotha. It is broken afresh for your every sin and mine.

"Never a sigh of passion or of pity,
Never a wail for weakness or for wrong,
Has not its archives in the angel's city,
Find not its echo in the endless song.

Men come to these altars crying over their sins. No wonder they weep. It is an awful thing to break the heart of a God of Love. The prodigal on his return laid his head on his father's shoulder and cried, "Father, I have sinned against you! Forgive me for breaking your heart." Sin made Christ's cross. His love endured it.

"I sometimes think about the cross,
And shut my eyes, and try to see
The cruel nails, and crown of thorns,
And Jesus crucified for me.

But even could I see him die,
I could but see a little part,
Of that great love, which like a fire,
Is always burning in his heart."

Let us ask, FOR WHAT PURPOSE IS THE CROSS OF CHRIST? We have learned that sin caused men to make it. The love of God permitted it. Now why was it? God had a reason for allowing the cross to stand. And certainly the reason was not to form the climax to the plotting of a gang of Jews. That cross, blood-stained and squalid; that Crimson Tree, where the Son of God was covered with ignominy and filth, and killed with appalling cruelty, was allowed of God for some specific pur-

pose. And the purpose was to make it a sacrifice for sin. And by His shed blood Christ became the Saviour of men, saving men from their sins. He thus saves men from something to something. He saves them from sin, not only its penalties, and to God. In his book, The Cross in the Light of To-day, Dr. McLane tells us, "Christ crucified is a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, sending forth purifying streams which bathe the stained and polluted heart of sin until it is washed white as snow." The Good Shepherd laid down His life to keep the sheep from the devouring wolves of sin. Herein is our only salvation. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." It reconciles us to God. Drives sin out of the heart and enthrones God. On the far away hill at the foot of the cross graced in dying love, the hope of the world was born. We have called it the tragedy of the ages. God has made it the greatest transaction which was ever consummated on earth. It was a transaction of blood to square the debt of sin.

"What can wash away my sins?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

For my pardon this I see,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
For my cleansing, this my plea,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Oh precious is that flow,
That makes me white as snow,
No other fount I know,
Nothing but the blood of Jesus."

However, its cleansing power is conditioned on faith. It is salvation only to those who believe and accept it. You recall the Egyptian Passover. God told the children of Israel to get busy, slaughter a lamb and daub the door-posts of their homes with blood and promised them who obeyed that the death messenger going on his rounds that night calling off the first born would pass them by. Nothing more was required. Nothing less would suffice. A Hebrew could have killed a chicken, pig or a calf and covered the posts with the blood therefrom, but it wouldn't have kept away the death visitor. The Hebrews did as they were told to do, and that night in Egypt while thousands of homes were disturbed and fathers and mothers were pacing the floors with their dead babies in their arms, calling for doctors, priests, and undertakers, the Israelites were slumbering as peacefully as ever. Blood made it so. It is the same today. Only in the soul that has been washed in the blood of the Lamb will you find abiding peace, which passeth knowledge. No wonder the cross has become the central theme of the Bible. The foundation of the whole volume. I trust you know the power of Christ's cross by experience; that the shed blood has washed away your

sins, and that your eternal salvation is sealed by the work done on Calvary.

We hear a lot about good training and selected environment. They are splendid. But a boy may be born in a Christian home and reared in a church going community, and yet go to the devil. There is security only in blood. In the blood is salvation and the power unto salvation. Helpless mortals that we be, we would be unable to find the Throne of God, unless there was a power drawing us to Him.

"Would you be free from your burden of sin?
There is power in the blood:
Would you over evil a victory win?
There is wonderful power in the blood."

There is no hope of everlasting life; there is no salvation; there is no power unto salvation, except in the cross. Instead of sin conquering Christ, Christ conquered sin by the cross. The most triumphant journey Christ made led down the Via Dolorosa to Calvary. In the cross is joy; in the cross is heavenly sweetness; in the cross is eternal peace; in the cross is soul salvation; in the cross is everlasting life. In Pilgrim Progress the moment Christian arrived at the place of the cross his burden slipped off his back and rolled away. This is the experience of all the redeemed. This can be the experience of all the unsaved.

"By sin's condemnation my heart was oppressed,
No peace could I find, and no comfort, no rest,

Till Jesus' voice whispered so sweetly to me,
'Come lay down your burden at Calvary.'

I plunged in the fountain, the remedy sure
For sin and uncleanness, the unfailing cure:
My burden fell off,—and today I can see,
There's perfect salvation at Calvary.

Oh, wonderful cross with its arms stretching wide
For you and for me, and the whole world beside:
No one is excluded, and mercy is free
For every lost sinner at Calvary."

"Now may the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

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